

DIVERSITAS LINGUARUM

Edited by:  
Thomas Stolz

Volume 1

ISSN 1619-5116

# Mediterranean languages

*Papers from the MEDTYP workshop,  
Tirrenia, June 2000*

Edited by  
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Universitätsverlag Dr. N. Brockmeyer

Bochum 2002

STASSEN, LEON (in prep.): *Predicative Possession*.

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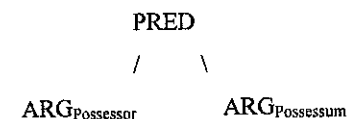
## Remarks on marginal possession: are feelings owned?

### Abstract

The article is divided in three concentric parts. The first one represents a general introduction regarding the problems of expressing the idea of possession in linguistic terms. The second deals with the specific problem of which strategies are used in the Mediterranean languages to express a very particular kind of "possessivity", namely feelings such as hunger or thirst, fear or joy. Finally, the third part addresses a more specific point: which expressions are used for 'being right' in the Mediterranean area (and beyond)?

### 0. Introduction

Predicative possession may be represented by the logic relation



This enables us to exclude from the possessive dimension sentences such as *Mary gave the book to John* which have been erroneously attributed to possession "in prepositional dative constructions" (DEN DIKKEN 1997: 135): 'give' is a three argument predicate, basically different from 'have', irrespective of the fact that the result of giving is to establish a (new) possessive relation.

Prototypical possession is represented by an animate possessor (usually [+human]) possessing a concrete inanimate possessum that lies near him without temporal limits (e.g. *Tom has a book*: HEINE 1997: 39).

As shown by SEILER (1983), there is a **continuum** between morphosyntactic expressions of attributive/determinative and predicative possession the poles of which are rep-

\* Section 0 was composed by PAOLO RAMAT, sections 1 and 2 were composed by ELISA ROMA, section 3 by GIANGUIDO MANZELLI

resented by the simple juxtaposition of the possessor and the possessum noun (N1+N2: *The Parliament House*, Kpelle *kwèli kòlò* 'a leopard's skin') and the predicative construction (N1+VB+N2: *Tom has a book*). Note that the PRED verb may even not appear, as in the Russian example

- (1) U Péti (est') mašina  
Near Peter (is) car  
'Peter has a car'

It is nevertheless clear that in this case we are dealing with predicative possession, as proved by the contrast with

- (2) Mašina v garaže<sub>LOC</sub> and Mašina u Péti<sub>ADESS</sub>  
car in garage car near P.  
'The car is in the garage' 'The car is near P.' [ISAČENKO 1974]

where the position of the 'LOC/ADESS' marks the contrast between the simple locative meaning and the possessive one.

It is a well established fact that the expression of possessivity via a 'have' verb, with the owner as subject and the possessum as direct object is not that widespread on a world-wide scale. One may note that there is a very clear areal distribution (cf. DAHL 1995: 19f.; KOPTJEVSKAJA-TAMM & WÄLCHLI 2001, § 7.2): it is mainly concentrated in Western Europe, where it is the basic strategy for Germanic and Romance languages. Even Albanian, Modern Greek, West and South Slavic languages share this feature, whereas East Slavic languages do not: Rus. *U menja kniga* 'have a book' (lit: 'Near me [there is a] book').<sup>1</sup>

A characteristic feature of the Western European languages is, indeed, the generalisation of the nominative/accusative sentence, whereby the (human) Agent/Experiencer – or even Patient – assumes the syntactic position of SUBJ so that we get the development

- (3) *mich hungert* (Germ.) (cf. Icel. *mig hungrar*) → *ich habe Hunger*  
(4) *me pudet* (Lat.) → *ho pudore* (Ital.) [see KURZOVÁ 1997: 283]

The 'have' construction makes use of the so-called "Action schema", where predicative possession is expressed by a verb etymologically meaning an action like 'get', 'seize', 'take', 'grasp' *et sim.* (HEINE 1997: 47).

- (5) *dis king-boi nów gét kómbi fo gów* (West African Pidgin Engl.)  
'This prince hasn't a friend to go' [HEINE 1997: 48]  
(6) *ani min qaw-a* (Waata (East Cushitic))  
'I house seize-IPFV'  
'I have a house' [HEINE 1997: 50]

All languages seem to have a means in order to distinguish between attributive/determinative and predicative possession. We are here concerned with predicative possession only.

To match the problems connected with this predicative possession there are basically two approaches: the semasiological and the onomasiological one. In the latter case the starting point is represented by the notion of "POSSESSION". Given the above definition of prototypical possession, the problem is not to enumerate and distinguish the meanings that can be expressed by a 'have' verb as in English, but how predicative possession is cross-linguistically expressed. For instance, when considering the expression of feelings – certainly not a prototypical kind of possession – we will see in the next section that the crucial point is the onomasiological opposition between languages which predicate feelings by saying 'X is in the state/situation Y' and languages which express them by saying 'X has a feeling Y'. The syntactic distinction between languages which encode EXPERIENCERS as SUBJECTS vs. languages with EXPERIENCERS in non-SUBJ position (as in (3) and (4); see BOSSONG 1998a) becomes irrelevant under this point of view: languages which say 'X is hungry', 'X has hunger' as well as 'X starves' all converge as for the parameter "EXPER as SUBJ", though the difference is obviously relevant for a typological description.

We will now examine a particular kind of "possession", which we already mentioned earlier, which by no means can be considered a prototypical possession.

<sup>1</sup> The 'have' strategy is present in Russian too (*konnata imel' dva okna* 'the room has two windows'), but it is much less frequent than the 'be' strategy and has many more semantic constraints.

## 1. Are feelings owned?

### 1.1. Preliminary remarks

I have investigated coding strategies for Psych- (feelings, emotions) and Psycho-physical States (sensations), which can be expressed through structures which also predicate Possession (Abstract Possession in HEINE 1997), and might thus be called Pseudo-possessive structures.<sup>2</sup> Not all the languages of the Mediterranean have been included in the study so far.<sup>3</sup>

The crucial typological distinction among the Mediterranean languages seems to be between languages which predicate "feelings" by saying 'X is in state/situation Y' vs. languages which express them by saying 'X has a feeling Y', i.e. between languages where the feeling is part of the predicate and languages where the feeling is an argument, rather than a distinction between languages which encode EXPERs as subjects vs. non-subjects, as BOSSONG's paper for EURO TYP indirectly suggests (see above). BOSSONG compares ten verbal notions 'to be cold, hungry, thirsty, to have an headache, to be glad, to be sorry, to like, to remember, to forget, to see', according to an agentivity scale, and notes that the more agentive the notion the most likely it is for the experiencer to be coded as a subject. Languages differ in the degree of "abstraction" involved in order to express any relationship between an animate and an inanimate argument, i.e. as to whether they tend to generalise an Animate-Agent equation in any case, or to mark inanimates as agentive-like Stimuli and animates as indirect arguments (EXPERs). The latter distinction seems to be too abstract to be significant as a test for a diffusion hypothesis for our area of investigation. As we said above, languages which say 'X is hungry', 'X has hunger' and 'X starves' all converge if the basis for comparison is the typological parameter – EXPER is coded as subject – but it is clear that there is no real

<sup>2</sup> The following feelings, sensations and psych-states have been included in the questionnaire: hunger, thirst, heat, cold, physical pain, fear, joy, worry, anxiety, sickness, hope, knowledge (of people/ information), belief, shame, wonder, pride, pleasure, regret, memory, forgetfulness, patience, dreams.

<sup>3</sup> I have gathered data regarding the following languages: Spanish, French, Sardinian, Italian, Slovene, Serbo-Croatian, Albanian, Modern Greek, Turkish, Modern Hebrew, Modern Standard Arabic, Palestinian Arabic, Syrian Arabic, Tunisian Arabic, Maltese, Moroccan Arabic.

I would like to thank all the native speakers who have filled in the questionnaire, and all the people who have helped me in the data collection, particularly SANDRO CARUANA, IGNAZIO PUTZU, SOUFIANE REZGUI and STEFANIA SCAGLIONE. Of course none of them are responsible for the way we have interpreted the data they have provided.

hint regarding areal influence on coding strategies in this case. On the other hand, while the 'have'-pattern for Core Possession is widespread in Europe, the 'have'-pattern for Abstract Possession seems to be typical in Romance languages and thus may be considered a feature which characterizes a Southern area.

Now, the cross-linguistically most common types of predicative structures that express Core Possession (a definite animate possessor has an indefinite inanimate possessum, cf. HEINE 1997: 39) seem to be the following (according to STASSEN's classification but using HEINE's labels (1997: 47)):

- (A) 'POSM is at-POSR/to-POSR' or 'POSM is POSR-gen.' (LOCATION/GOAL SCHEMA or EQUATION SCHEMA)
- (B) 'POSR, POSM-his is/exists' or 'POSR-gen. POSM is/exists' (TOPIC SCHEMA or GENITIVE SCHEMA)
- (C) 'POSR is with POSM' (COMPANION SCHEMA)
- (D) 'POSR has/holds POSM' (ACTION SCHEMA)

The cross-linguistically most common types of predicates that express Psych-States seem to be (in a very tentative classification) the following ones:

- 1) [NP]SUBJ [(Copula/Existential V) ADJ/PP]PRED 'X (is) hungry'  
EXPER FEELING/EMOTION/STATE (e.g. English, Arabic)
- 2) [NP]SUBJ [V]PRED 'X starves'  
EXPER FEELING/EMOTION/STATE (e.g. Greek)
- 3) [NP]SUBJ [VP[V NP]PRED 'X has hunger'  
EXPER FEELING/EMOTION/STATE (e.g. Italian, French, Spanish)
- 4) [NP]SUBJ [(Copula/Existential V) PP]PRED 'Hunger (is) to/on/at X'  
FEELING/EMOTION/STATE EXPER (e.g. Maltese Moroccan Arabic)
- 5) [VP [V NP]]PRED '(It) hungers me'  
FEELING/EMOTION/STATE EXPER (e.g. Slovene, German)
- 6) the feeling is not directly expressed: Tok Pisin *Nek bilong mi drai* 'My neck is dry'=  
'I'm thirsty'.

[NP [NP] NP]SUBJ [ADJ]PRED  
EXPER

Maybe this type substitutes the theoretically possible type

[NP [NP NP]]SUBJ [Existential V]PRED ('X's hunger exists')  
 FEELING/EMOTION/STATE EXPER

where Feeling and Experiencer appear as members of the same NP, and the Feeling is treated as a fully referential NP.

If one compares the typology of Psych-State expressions to the typology of predicative possession, one may note the following possibilities of overlap vs. divergence:

- A) LOCATION/GOAL/EQUATION SCHEMA = TYPE 4
- B) TOPIC OR GENITIVE SCHEMA = TYPE 6
- C) COMPANION SCHEMA = TYPE 1
- D) ACTION SCHEMA = TYPE 3

The expression of a Psych-State can involve just **one** NP and thus just one argument (the EXPER, while no Stimulus is required), as in the case of types 2 and 5, which thus do not match any predicative possession expression type, as the expression of possession **must** involve two NPs (the Possessor and the Possesum), whether they are both arguments or not<sup>4</sup>.

On the other hand it is well known that 'being in a place or state' or 'being in/at somebody', 'existing' and 'having an object' are formally linked together in many languages (cf. CLARK 1978, SEILER 1983: 56-58 and HEINE 1997: 203; this has been noted for pidgins and creoles also, see ROMAINE 1988: 51 on English based creoles *get* and Portuguese creoles *tem*). E. CLARK studied the following four basic notions:

Possession (typical or core possession): *I have a cat* (indefinite (inanimate) POSM)

Existence: *There is a cat (on the table)* (indefinite subject)

Location: *The cat is on the table* (definite subject)

Ownership: *The cat is mine* (definite POSM (subject))

She tried to demonstrate that if a language uses different lexical items for these notions, it will either group Possession and Ownership together (both are possessive no-

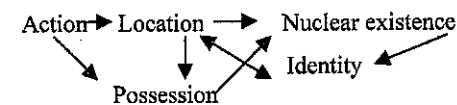
tions) and Location and Existence (also semantically close to each other), or Existence and Possession (predication on an indefinite term) and Location and Ownership (predication on a definite term).

HEINE (1997: 205) sets up a grammaticalization chain which shows regularities in conceptual shift between these notions:

Postural verb > Locative verb/copula > Possessive verb > One-place copula of existence > Two-place copula of Identity

This would rather seem to group Possession and Location together on the one hand, and Existence and Ownership on the other. Nevertheless, the possessive verb stage might be skipped in the chain: as HEINE admits (1997: 207), "locative expressions may be extended straight to identity without necessarily involving possession or (nuclear) existence." Moreover, the French and Spanish evolution from possession to existence, for example, does not involve any originally postural verb. Thus it is probably better to revise HEINE's second grammaticalization chain (1997: 207), which includes the original Action meaning of the postural verb<sup>5</sup>

Action > Location > Possession (Permanent > Physical, Temporary, Inalienable > Inalienable inanimate, Alienable inanimate, Abstract) > Nuclear existence > Identity as follows:



(Permanent > Physical, Temporary, Inalienable > Inalienable inanimate, Alienable inanimate, Abstract)

This better represents the fact that Action and Possession might be related independently from Existence and Location, while the chain related to Possession (from Permanent to Abstract) maintains HEINE's though the position it occupies stresses the fact that this hierarchy seems to be in fact independent from the general one.

<sup>5</sup> HEINE notes that "postural verbs include both inactive (e.g. *to stand*) and active meanings (e.g. *to stand up*)" and "the former are likely to be conceptually derived from the latter", so this "is suggestive of the Action Schema".

<sup>4</sup> LEON STASSEN has pointed out to us that possessive structures which express the possessum through a verb (a predicate) rather than an NP do exist. Such a situation is probably the one described by HEINE (1997: 189) for Yaqui, where the TAM suffixes can be added both to a verbal root and to a possessum, e.g. *Peo vuit-ek* 'Pete ran' and *Peo kar-ek* 'Pete has house(s)'. We assume that this kind of structure is irrelevant for the Mediterranean area, though from a diachronic point of view one might say that a language which uses either the Location/Goal/Equation or the Companion Schema and has zero copula can easily develop such a structure.

Thus this chain reflects the fact that a locative verb/copula is perfectly capable of becoming a one-place copula of Existence and also a two-place copula of Identity without necessarily involving a Possession stage. 'Be' and 'have' might live separate lives for a long time though they can both represent a sort of 'logical predicate', which has little semantic content, few selectional restrictions on arguments, and a basically grammatical function, as SEILER (1983: 62) has noted. The formal overlap between Location, Possession, Existence, Identity and Ownership (which in the Mediterranean mostly surfaces as a sub-class of Identity) does not require an original Action schema in the first place, at least in its narrowest sense, i.e. the use of a transitive predicate to express Possession. I argue that the chain, in so far as it represents possible conceptual shifts, might really go in the opposite direction if the shift covers only a restricted area in the chain (e.g. from an Identity zero copula to Location to Possession). The history of an originally transitive predicate ('hold, grasp') becoming a possessive predicate and ultimately an existence predicate (as in French *il y a*) goes in the opposite direction as compared to the history of an originally postural expression becoming a transitive possessive predicate (as in Maltese and Tunisian Arabic, see below).

Given the above facts, such notions as Location, Existence and Ownership have been included in the questionnaire, so that a broader picture of the internal relationships within each language might prevent from overgeneralisations about external (cross-linguistic) relationships. The idea that lay behind the questionnaire was that the spread of the core Possession pattern to Abstract Possession, i.e. the formal overlap between Possession and Psych-State, must in principle be kept distinct from the spread of the so-called Action Schema, i.e. the expression of Possession through a transitive predicate. In fact, such formal overlap might go even farther in languages which do not show any trace of the 'have'-pattern. Irish, for example, uses the Possession/Location/Existential structure, i.e. 'X (possessum or state) is on/at Y (possessor or place)', for any kind of Psych-State, including e.g. knowledge, and, in a more restricted way, the Ownership Schema, i.e. 'X (possessum) is with Y (owner)'. BOSSONG's parameter becomes typologically significant only if we compare languages which code 'being in a condition/state' (and thus Psych-State, i.e. Abstract Possession or Pseudo-Possession) and 'having something' (Core or True Possession) in similar ways.

## 1.2. The Mediterranean languages

The following is a list of the lexical items used in each language for core Possession and for the three basic notions usually formally linked with it, i.e. Existence, Location, Ownership. Within Possession, a positive or negative value is given according to whether the same predicate structure and lexical item used with core Possession is possible and actually represents an unmarked option with Abstract Possession (HEINE 1997), i.e. whether Abstract Possession is actually a suitable label, and whether inanimate possessors are allowed (this is possibly a different sort of abstract possession). (Masculine) third singular present indicative forms are used here as quotation forms for verbal lexical items<sup>6</sup>. "POSSESSION" always refers to both alienable and inalienable possession; "\*" means only partial overlap.

Spanish					
POSSESSION	ABSTRACT POSS.	INANIMATE POSR	EXISTENCE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP
<i>tiene</i> 'has'	Yes (physical temporary state)	Yes	<i>hay</i> 'there is'; <i>existe</i> 'exists'	<i>está</i> 'stays'	<i>es de</i> 'is + PP (POSR), <i>es suyo</i> 'is + possessive ADJ'
4 different items					

French					
POSSESSION	ABSTRACT POSS.	INANIMATE POSR	EXISTENCE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP
<i>a</i> 'has'	Yes (physical temporary state)	Yes (apparently quite restricted)	<i>y a</i> 'there is'; <i>existe</i> 'exists'	<i>est</i> + PP	<i>est/appartient</i> + PP (à)
POSSESSION = EXISTENCE*, LOCATION = OWNERSHIP					

Sardinian					
POSSESSION	ABSTRACT POSS.	INANIMATE POSR	EXISTENCE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP
<i>tenidi</i> 'has'	Yes (physical temporary state)	Yes	<i>c'esti</i> 'here is'; <i>ddu esti</i> 'there is'	<i>esti (me in)</i> 'is (+ PP)'	<i>esti(de)</i> 'is' (+ PP, + possessive ADJ/pronoun)
EXISTENCE* = LOCATION = OWNERSHIP; POSSESSION on <i>ist own</i>					

<sup>6</sup> Transliterations for Arabic are given according to the conventions used by HOLES (1995), but long vowels are marked with a dash instead of a colon, and ' is used for the hamza instead of the IPA symbol for the glottal stop.

Italian					
POSSESSION	ABSTRACT POSS.	INANIMATE POSR	EXISTENCE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP
<i>ha</i> 'has'	Yes (physical temporary state)	Yes	<i>c'è</i> 'there is'; <i>esiste</i> 'exists'	<i>è</i> + PP 'is'	<i>è</i> ( <i>di</i> ) 'is' (+ PP), <i>è</i> <i>suo</i> ('is' + possessive ADJ)
EXISTENCE* = LOCATION = OWNERSHIP; POSSESSION on 1st own					

Slovene					
POSSESSION	ABSTRACT POSS.	INANIMATE POSR	EXISTENCE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP
<i>ima</i> ('has'; <i>ima</i> -POSR POSM); <i>nima</i> 'has not'	No ( <i>je</i> * ADJ; <i>zebe ga</i> 'freezes him' = 'he's cold'; synthetic verb; Yes only with news, possibly headache/disease, patience, dream)	Yes (restricted)	<i>je</i> '(there) is'; <i>ni</i> 'is not'; <i>obstaja</i> 'exists'	<i>je</i> 'is' (+ PP)	<i>je</i> 'is', <i>ni</i> 'is not' (+ possessive ADJ)
EXISTENCE = LOCATION = OWNERSHIP; POSSESSION on 1st own; ABSTRACT POSSESSION partially agrees with EXISTENCE, LOCATION and OWNERSHIP					

Serbian					
POSSESSION	ABSTRACT POSS.	INANIMATE POSR	EXISTENCE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP
<i>ima</i> 'has' ( <i>ima</i> -POSR POSM); <i>nema</i> 'has not'	No (ADJ + <i>je</i> ; NP + PP <i>je</i> , e.g. <i>hladno mu je</i> 'cold to him is' = 'he's cold'; synthetic verb; Yes only with news, patience, dream)	Yes	<i>je/ima</i> '(there) is/has'; <i>postoji</i> 'exists'	<i>je</i> 'is' (+ PP)	<i>je</i> 'is' (+ possessive ADJ)
LOCATION = OWNERSHIP; POSSESSION = EXISTENCE*; ABSTRACT POSSESSION agrees with LOCATION and OWNERSHIP					

Albanian					
POSSESSION	ABSTRACT POSS.	INANIMATE POSR	EXISTENCE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP
<i>ka</i> 'has' (POSR-NOM <i>ka</i> POSM-ACC)	Yes (physical temporary state)	Yes	<i>ka</i> 'has' ( <i>në</i> 'in' LOC <i>ka</i> indef. subject) <i>ekziston</i> 'exists'	<i>është/është</i> 'is' (+ PP)	<i>është/është</i> ( <i>e tij</i> ) 'is' (+ PP, poss.ADJ)
POSSESSION = EXISTENCE; LOCATION = OWNERSHIP; ABSTRACT POSSESSION agrees with POSSESSION					

Greek					
POSSESSION	ABSTRACT POSS.	INANIMATE POSR	EXISTENCE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP
<i>éyer</i> 'has'	No (mostly synthetic verb: e.g. <i>πενώ</i> 'I'm hungry'; Yes only with news, headache/disease, patience, dream)	Yes	<i>υπάρχει</i> 'exists'; <i>έχει</i> 'has' (+ indef. subject) = 'there is'	<i>είναι</i> 'is' (+ PP)	<i>είναι</i> 'is' (+ GEN, <i>δικός</i> + 'own' + GEN)
LOCATION = OWNERSHIP; POSSESSION, EXISTENCE and ABSTRACT POSSESSION use distinct lexical items (Type 2 above)					

Turkish					
POSSESSION	ABSTRACT POSS.	INANIMATE POSR	EXISTENCE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP
<i>var/yok</i> 'is/is not' (POSR-GEN POSM <i>var</i> ); POSR-LOC POSM <i>var</i> temporary POSS.	No ( <i>açtır</i> 'hungry-3SG' = 'he is hungry'; <i>güzel odaları var</i> 'susamıştır' 'thirsty-3sg'; <i>üşüyor(um)</i> 'freeze-PROGR(-I)' = 'I'm/he's cold'; <i>korkuyor(um)</i> 'fear-PROGR (-I)')	Yes ( <i>otelin çok güzel odaları var</i> 'hotel-GEN many beautiful rooms-its exists' = 'the hotel has many nice rooms')	<i>var/yok</i> 'is/is not'	<i>var/yok</i> 'is/is not'	<i>-dir</i> 'is' / $\emptyset$ (POSM POSR-GEN ( <i>dir</i> ))
POSSESSION = LOCATION = EXISTENCE; ABSTRACT POSSESSION* = OWNERSHIP					

Hebrew					
POSSESSION	ABSTRACT POSS.	INANIMATE POSR	EXISTENCE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP
<i>yeš lo X/lo yeš X</i> 'X is to him' ( <i>yeš le</i> -POSR POSM; <i>le</i> -POSR <i>yeš</i> POSM)	No (mostly NP(EXPER) + ADJ, but also NP(FEEL) <i>le</i> -EXPER, with $\emptyset$ copula, e.g. <i>Kar li</i> 'I'm cold'; Yes only with headache, dream)	Yes	<i>yešeyn</i> 'is/is not'	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$ (copula = 3SG. PRON + <i>šel</i> 'of' POSR)
POSSESSION = EXISTENCE; LOCATION = OWNERSHIP; ABSTRACT POSSESSION* = LOCATION = OWNERSHIP ( $\emptyset$ copula + ADJ/PP)					

Maltese					
POSSESSION	ABSTRACT POSS.	INANIMATE POSR	EXISTENCE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP
$[\emptyset]$ <i>ghandu</i> 'at his place' ((POSR) <i>ghand</i> -POSR POSM)	Yes (physical temporary state)	Yes (restricted)	$[\emptyset]$ <i>hemm</i> 'there (is)'; <i>jeżisti</i> 'exists'	$[\emptyset]$ <i>huwa</i> (copula, 3SG PRON) / <i>qiegħed</i> ('staying', active participle)	$\emptyset$ ( <i>tiegħ-</i> ) 'of' POSR
4 different items or POSSESSION = EXISTENCE = LOCATION = OWNERSHIP ( $\emptyset$ copula)					

Standard Arabic					
POSSESSION	ABSTRACT POSS.	INANIMATE POSR	EXISTENCE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP
$[\emptyset]$ <i>'in-dahu/lahu</i> ((POSR) 'inda-POSR/li-POSR POSM); <i>yamlikū</i> 'owns'	No (EXPER ( $\emptyset$ copula) + ADJ; Yes only physical pain, news, patience and dream)	very restricted, but cf. <i>kullu baladin 'indahū malikun</i> 'aw ra 'isun 'every country has a king or a president'	<i>hunāka</i> 'there' (also <i>ḥammata</i> 'there'; V-S) / <i>yūjadū</i> 'exists' / <i>mawjūdun</i> 'existing' (S-V) 'there is'	$\emptyset$ (NP <i>fi</i> 'in' LOC, or other locative preposition)	$\emptyset$ ( <i>lahu</i> 'to him', <i>li</i> POSR 'to POSR')
LOCATION = OWNERSHIP; ABSTRACT POSSESSION agrees with OWNERSHIP and LOCATION ( $\emptyset$ copula); negation with 'indahū, lahu and hunāka is not verbal ( <i>laysa</i> is used), but of course 'indahū and lahu agree with POSR, and nominal POSRs are fronted and nominatively case-marked: <i>Ḍāka rrajulu 'indahū/lahu māhūn kaḥīrun</i> (that the-man at/to-him money much) 'that man has a lot of money'.					

Palestinian Arabic					
POSSESSION	ABSTRACT POSS.	INANIMATE POSR	EXISTENCE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP
<i>indu</i> 'at him' ((POS) 'ind-POS) POSM)	No (EXPER (Ø copula) + ADJ; Yes only physical pain, news, patience and dream)	No ((POS/LOC) <i>fi</i> -LOC POSM, e.g. <i>madīnti fihā madāris kifra</i> 'town-1SG in-3SG.F. schools many = 'My town has many schools')	<i>fi</i> / <i>mawjūd</i>	Ø (NP <i>fi</i> 'in' LOC, or other locative preposition)	Ø ( <i>taba'</i> -POS) POSR)
EXISTENCE = INANIMATE POSSESSOR; LOCATION = OWNERSHIP; ABSTRACT POSSESSION agrees with OWNERSHIP and LOCATION (Ø copula); POSSESSION is negated by means of <i>fis</i> 'doesn't exist', e.g. <i>fis 'indhum wlad</i> 'they don't have children', but also <i>'arra 'is malhūs 'ixwāt</i> 'the president doesn't have any brother' (lit. brothers). Note: Jordan Arabic is mostly similar, but cf. <i>kull balad 'indhā malik 'aw ra 'is</i> 'every country has a king or a president'					

Syrian Arabic					
POSSESSION	ABSTRACT POSS.	INANIMATE POSR	EXISTENCE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP
<i>andu</i> 'at him' ((POS) <i>and</i> -POS) POSM)	No (Yes only news and dream)	No (but cf. <i>kull balad 'andu malik 'aw ra 'is</i> 'every country has a king or a president') restricted)	<i>fi</i> / <i>mawjūd</i>	Ø] (NP <i>fi</i> 'in' LOC, or other locative preposition)	Ø (('i)-POS) POSR)
EXISTENCE = INANIMATE POSSESSOR; LOCATION = OWNERSHIP; ABSTRACT POSSESSION agrees with OWNERSHIP and LOCATION (Ø copula)					

Tunisian Arabic					
POSSESSION	ABSTRACT POSS.	INANIMATE POSR	EXISTENCE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP
[Ø] <i>andu</i> 'at him' ((POS) <i>and</i> -POS) POSM)	No (Yes only physical pain, news, patience and dream)	partially restricted; cf. <i>kull blād 'andhā malik wallā ra 'is</i> 'every country has a king or a president'	<i>θamma</i> 'there (is)'; <i>mawjūd</i> 'exists'	Ø (NP <i>fi</i> 'in' LOC, or other locative preposition)	Ø ( <i>miā 'hu</i> 'his possession, goods')
LOCATION = OWNERSHIP; the lexical items for POSSESSION (' <i>andu</i> ) and EXISTENCE ( <i>θamma</i> ) can be negated as verbs ( <i>mā...-s</i> ) but <i>θamma</i> is invariable while ' <i>and</i> - of course agrees with POSR; ABSTRACT POSSESSION agrees with OWNERSHIP and LOCATION (Ø copula)					

Moroccan Arabic					
POSSESSION	ABSTRACT POSS.	INANIMATE POSR	EXISTENCE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP
[Ø] <i>andu</i> 'at him' ((POS) ' <i>andhu</i> -POS) POSM); <i>ra</i> ' <i>and</i> -temporary POS)	No (agrees with LOCATION: <i>fih</i> <i>ljjā</i> 'he's hungry'; Yes only news, patience, dream)	No (agrees with LOCATION)	( <i>rāh</i> 'now') <i>kāyn</i> 'staying'	<i>rāh</i> 'now' ( <i>f(i)</i> 'in' LOC, or other locative preposition)	Ø ( <i>dyālū</i> 'his' <i>dyāl</i> POSR)
LOCATION = OWNERSHIP; the lexical items for POSSESSION (' <i>andhu</i> ) and EXISTENCE ( <i>kāyn</i> ) can be negated as verbs ( <i>mā...-s</i> ); <i>kāyn</i> inflects for number					

## 2. Results of the comparison

Even in Romance languages, where it is most used for Psych-States, the transitive predicate seems to be still basically restricted (in its unmarked usages) to psychophysical temporary states. Physical States (sensations) like hunger, thirst, cold, heat, seem to be more easily coded as independent NPs, while Mental States seem to prefer to be coded as verbs (States) or predicative adjectives (Qualities, Emotions). In fact the most widespread states/feelings that are compatible with a predicative possession construction seem to be fever/temperature, or for that matter diseases and in general physical pain, news, patience and dreams. This is also possible in Standard Arabic.

Both Greek and Serbian extensively use the possessive structure for inanimate POSRs, but not for Abstract Possession. The opposite does not occur; only in Maltese do we find a situation in which inanimate POSRs are somehow restricted, but Abstract Possession is perfectly grammatical with Core Possession *ghandu*. I believe this does not happen by chance. In fact, in Tunisian Arabic the possessive expression, which seems to behave exactly as the Maltese one as far as increasing verbhood is concerned (obligatory agreement with POSR, circumfix negation; cf. COMRIE 1982; DAROT 1996), can be used with, inanimate POSRs, but not for Abstract Possession. This suggests that as far the "have-drift" is concerned Maltese and Tunisian Arabic have undergone similar developments, but Maltese has somehow gone beyond the presumable internal development, skipping one stage.

The diverging data of Maltese, Arabic Dialects (such as Tunisian Arabic) and the Slavonic languages in the Mediterranean show that in fact the two spreads ("have-drift" and concrete possession expressions moving on to abstract possession) should be kept distinct, as we said, and that in the area of Psych-State expressions languages in the Mediterranean seem to follow mainly inherited patterns which derive from their genetic affiliation. At least they do not show generalized contact traces, apart possibly from the case of Maltese, which has extended the possessive pattern similarly to Romance languages, and Sardinian and some Southern Italian dialects, which, just like Spanish and Catalan, have substituted a new lexical item (derived from Latin *tenere*) for Latin *habere*.

The relatively short documented history of Albanian does not allow us to assume that the widespread use of *ka* 'have' for Psych-States has any relationship with medieval



contacts with other Mediterranean languages, even though it might be significant that Albanian diverges from the Balkan languages here. As far as we can see, 16<sup>th</sup> century Albanian did not show great discrepancies from present day Albanian in this respect.

### 3. Beyond feelings and sensations: being right<sup>7</sup>

Being right is not a matter of feelings, it is rather an issue either about the truth or the falseness of somebody's or oneself's statements, judgement, or opinions. English-speaking people say *you are right* when they agree with your statements, but French-speaking people say *vous avez raison* (lit. 'you have reason') to express the same meaning, therefore making use of a possessive construction. This short section deals with the latter type of construction, in search of a common syntactic and semantic feature in the languages of the Mediterranean area. It is obvious that such a specific investigation makes sense from a typological viewpoint only if one takes into account what was previously argued in sections 0. - 2.

#### 3.1. Non-Mediterranean languages

First of all I will take into consideration a sample of some (18) European languages (not very distant from the Mediterranean Sea) in order to compare the data drawn from different areas. I have chosen to compare a very restricted set of sentences, one expressing a sensation (see sections 1. and 2. above), one expressing a concrete possession, and one expressing the state of being right. Since many languages have alternative ways of expressing possession, especially if feelings and sensations are concerned, I will distinguish between prototypical and non-prototypical possessive constructions, even though sometimes, for the sake of simplicity, the distinction can turn out to be quite rough.<sup>8</sup> It is possible to have a quick look at the structural correspondences in the set of sentences by making use of capital letters after the examples given for each language according to the following equivalences:

<sup>7</sup> I wish to thank BARBARA AIRO, JOSEPH BRINCAT, SANDRO CARUANA, HAFEZ HAIDAR, ELIO JUCCI, VITTORIA LA FAUCI and SOUFIANE REZGUI for their patience in providing me with information on Arabic, Maltese, Modern Hebrew and Sicilian.

<sup>8</sup> For instance such a distinction can be considered to be disputable as regards Arabic varieties in which different constructions (with partial semantic overlapping) are due to a distinction between permanent and temporary possession (see HEINE 1997: 34-35, 38-41, etc.).

A = non-possessive construction

B = prototypical possessive construction

C = non-prototypical possessive construction

	feelings	concrete possession	"being right"	
Modern Irish	<i>tá ocras orm</i>	<i>tá leabhar agam</i>	<i>tá an ceart agam</i> <sup>9</sup>	CBB
Spoken Welsh	<i>mae chwyt bwyd arnaf i</i>	<i>mae llyfr 'da fi</i>	<i>rydw i iawn</i>	CBA
Breton	<i>noan am-eus</i> <sup>10</sup>	<i>ul levr am-eus</i>	<i>emañ ar gwir ganin</i>	BBC
Finnish	<i>minun on nälkä</i> <sup>11</sup>	<i>minulla on kirja</i>	<i>olen oikeassa</i>	CBA
Estonian	<i>mul on nälg</i>	<i>mul on raamat</i>	<i>mul on õigus</i>	BBB
Latvian	<i>es esmu izsalcis</i>	<i>man ir grāmata</i>	<i>man ir taisnība</i>	ABB
Lithuanian	<i>esù alkanas</i>	<i>turiu knygą</i>	<i>ąš teisus</i> <sup>12</sup>	ABA
Norwegian (NN) <sup>13</sup>	<i>eg er svoltet</i>	<i>eg har ei bok</i>	<i>eg har rett</i>	ABB
Swedish	<i>jag är hungrig</i>	<i>jag har ett bok</i>	<i>jag har rätt</i>	ABB
Danish	<i>jeg er sulten</i>	<i>jeg har et bog</i>	<i>jeg har ret</i>	ABB
English	<i>I'm hungry</i>	<i>I've got a book</i>	<i>I'm right</i>	ABA
Dutch	<i>ik heb honger</i>	<i>ik heb een boek</i>	<i>ik heb gelijk</i>	BBB
German	<i>ich habe Hunger</i> <sup>14</sup>	<i>ich habe ein Buch</i>	<i>ich habe Recht</i> <sup>15</sup>	BBB
Russian	<i>ja góloden</i> <sup>16</sup>	<i>u menjá kniga</i>	<i>ja práv</i>	ABA
Ukrainian	<i>xóču jisty</i> <sup>17</sup>	<i>máju knyžku</i> <sup>18</sup>	<i>máju ráciju</i> <sup>19</sup>	ABB
Polish	<i>jestem głodny</i> <sup>20</sup>	<i>mam książkę</i>	<i>mam rację</i>	ABB
Czech	<i>mám hlad</i> <sup>21</sup>	<i>mám knihu</i>	<i>mám pravdu</i>	BBB
Hungarian	<i>éhes vagyok</i>	<i>van egy könyvem</i>	<i>igazam van</i>	ABB

<sup>9</sup> Modern Irish *tá an ceart agam* (lit. 'there's the right at me') means also 'I have the right' (Ó SIADHAIL 1980: 79). Also Modern Irish *tá tú ceart* 'you are right' with *ceart* 'right' as adjective i.e. CBA, meaning also 'you are all right'.

<sup>10</sup> Also Breton *noan zo deuet din 'jai faim (faim est venue a moi)* (MORVANNOU 1979/1990: 166-167), i.e. ABC, of Italian *mi è venuta fame* (lit. 'to me has come hunger').

<sup>11</sup> Also Finnish *minulla on nälkä* (lit. 'at me there's hunger'), *olen nälkäinen* (lit. 'I'm hungry'), *olen nälissáni* (lit. 'I'm in my hungers'), i.e. BBA or ABA..

<sup>12</sup> Also Lithuanian *jūms teisybė* 'you're right' (lit. 'to you (the) truth'), i.e. ABC.

<sup>13</sup> NN = nynorsk (New Norwegian), spoken in Western Norway.

<sup>14</sup> Also German *ich bin hungrig* (lit. 'I am hungry') and *mich hungert* (lit. 'me (it) starves') or *es hungert mich* (lit. 'it starves me'), i.e. ABB.

<sup>15</sup> German *ich habe recht* before the orthographic reform (*Neue Deutsche Rechtschreibung*) of 1996.

<sup>16</sup> Also Russian *ja xóču est'* (lit. 'I want to eat') or *mne xóčetsja est'* (lit. 'to me (it) wants REFL to eat').

<sup>17</sup> Also Ukrainian *meni xóčetsja jisty* (lit. 'to me (it) wants REFL to eat'); of also *jomú hólodno j xólodno* 'he's hungry and cold' (lit. 'to him (is) hungry and cold (ADV!)'), i.e. CBB, of Russian *emú gólodno i xólodno* 'id.'.

<sup>18</sup> Also Ukrainian *u méne knyžka* (lit. 'at me (is) (a) book'), i.e. ACB.

<sup>19</sup> Also Ukrainian *ja právyj* or *ja práv* (lit. 'I (am) right'), i.e. ABA or ACA.

<sup>20</sup> Also Polish *chcę jeść* (lit. 'I want to eat') or *chce mi się jeść* (lit. 'to me (it) wants REFL to eat').

<sup>21</sup> Also Czech *jsem hladový* (lit. 'I'm hungry'), i.e. ABB.

## 3.2. Mediterranean languages

As for the languages associated with the Mediterranean Sea, I have collected data for 28 linguistic varieties (not only official languages). Though richer than the previous one, this sample is still unsatisfying, especially for the Southern bank of the Mediterranean basin, i.e. the Arabic side.<sup>22</sup> Out of 28 languages 14 (all, except Basque, belonging to the Romance group) are spoken in the North-Western area (Iberian Peninsula, France and Italy), 8 in the North-Eastern area (Balkan Peninsula and Anatolia), 6 in the Southern area (North Africa and Middle East).

	feelings	concrete possession	"being right"	
NORTH-WEST				
Basque <sup>23</sup>	<i>gose nago</i>	<i>liburu bat (ba) dut</i>	<i>arrazoi dut</i>	ABB
Portuguese	<i>estou com fome</i> <sup>24</sup>	<i>tenho um livro</i>	<i>tenho razão</i>	CBB
Spanish	<i>tengo hambre</i>	<i>tengo un libro</i>	<i>tengo razón</i>	BBB
Catalan	<i>tinc gana</i> <sup>25</sup>	<i>tinc un llibre</i>	<i>tinc raó</i>	BBB
Sardinian (Log.) <sup>26</sup>	<i>tenzo fàmine</i>	<i>tenzo unu libberu</i>	<i>tenzo rejone</i> <sup>27</sup>	BBB
Corsican	<i>aghju fame</i>	<i>aghju un libru</i>	<i>aghju ragiò</i>	BBB
French	<i>J'ai faim</i>	<i>J'ai un livre</i>	<i>J'ai raison</i>	BBB
Occitan (Leng.) <sup>28</sup>	<i>ai fam</i>	<i>ai un libre</i>	<i>ai rason</i>	BBB
Friulian	<i>'o al fan</i>	<i>'o al un libri</i>	<i>o ai resòn</i>	BBB
Venetian	<i>gò fame</i>	<i>gò un libro</i>	<i>gh'o raxon</i>	BBB
Genoese	<i>gh'o famme</i>	<i>gh'o un libbro</i>	<i>ho ragione</i>	BBB
Italian	<i>ho fame</i>	<i>ho un libro</i>	<i>tèngo raggiòne</i>	BBB
Neapolitan	<i>tèngo fàmma</i>	<i>tèngo 'nu libbro</i>	<i>haiu ragiuni</i>	BBB
Sicilian	<i>haiu fami</i>	<i>haiu on libbru</i>		

<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately Berber data were too scanty to be taken into account.

<sup>23</sup> *Euskara batua* ("unified Basque").

<sup>24</sup> Also Portuguese *tenho fome* 'I'm hungry' (lit. 'I have hunger'), i.e. BBB, instead of *estou com fome* (lit. 'I stay=am with hunger'), in which the possessum is conceptualized as a kind of companion (HEINE 1997: 47 and 59).

<sup>25</sup> Also Catalan *tinc fam* 'I'm hungry' in Valencia.

<sup>26</sup> Log. = Logudorese Sardinian, spoken in the North-Western area, except Gallura, Sassari and Alghero.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Logudorese *si tenias fàmine alias mandigadu* 'if you were hungry, you would eat' and *tenet rejone*, *eppuru si devet cagliare* 'he's right, but he must keep silent' (CORDA 1994: 101 and 103).

<sup>28</sup> Leng. = Lengadocian Occitan or Central Occitan or *occitan referencial*.

## NORTH-EAST

Slovene	<i>lácen sem</i>	<i>imám knjigo</i>	<i>prav imám</i>	ABB
Serbo-Croat	<i>gládan sam</i>	<i>imám knjigu</i>	<i>imám právo</i> <sup>29</sup>	ABB
Macedonian	<i>gláden sum</i> <sup>30</sup>	<i>imam kniga</i>	<i>imam právo</i> <sup>31</sup>	ABB
Bulgarian	<i>gláden sám</i> <sup>32</sup>	<i>imam kniga</i>	<i>imam právo</i> <sup>33</sup>	ABB
Romanian	<i>mí-e foame</i>	<i>am o carte</i>	<i>am dreptate</i>	CBB
Albanian	<i>kam urí</i> <sup>34</sup>	<i>kam një libër</i>	<i>kam të drejtë</i>	BBB
Modern Greek	<i>πεινάω</i> <sup>35</sup>	<i>έχω ένα βιβλίο</i>	<i>έχω δικαιο</i>	ABB
Turkish	<i>karnum aç</i> <sup>36</sup>	<i>bir kitabım var</i> <sup>37</sup>	<i>hakkım var</i> <sup>38</sup>	ABB

## SOUTH

Modern Hebrew	<i>aní ra'év</i>	<i>yeš li séfer</i>	<i>aní tsodék</i> <sup>39</sup>	ABA
Written Arabic <sup>40</sup>	<i>'aná jaw 'ānun</i>	<i>li kitābun</i> <sup>41</sup>	<i>ma'ī al-ḥāqqu</i> <sup>42</sup>	ABC
Palestinian Arabic	<i>'āna ju 'ān</i>	<i>'ēndī kitāb</i> <sup>43</sup>	<i>má'ī l-ḥāqq</i> <sup>44</sup>	ABC
Egyptian Arabic	<i>'āna ga'ān</i>	<i>'āndī kitāb</i> <sup>45</sup>	<i>'āndī ḥāqq</i> <sup>46</sup>	ABB
Moroccan Arabic	<i>āna zī'ān</i>	<i>'āndī kitāb</i> <sup>47</sup>	<i>'āndī l-ḥāqq</i> <sup>48</sup>	ABB
Maltese	<i>għandl i-ġuħ</i> <sup>49</sup>	<i>għandl ktieb</i>	<i>għandl raġun</i> <sup>50</sup>	BBB

<sup>29</sup> Also Serbo-Croat *u právo sam* 'I'm right' (lit. 'in (the) right I am') i.e. ABA.

<sup>30</sup> Also Macedonian *i se jáde* 'elle a faim' (FOULON-HRISTOVA 1998: 121), lit. 'to her REFL (it) eats'.

<sup>31</sup> Also Macedonian *práv sum* 'I'm right' (lit. 'right I am'), i.e. ABA.

<sup>32</sup> Also Bulgarian *jadé mi se* 'I'm hungry' (lit. '(it) eats to me REFL') of. Serbo-Croat *jedē mi se* 'I feel like eating (something)'.  
<sup>33</sup> Also Bulgarian *práv sám* 'I'm right' (lit. 'right I am') i.e. ABA.

<sup>34</sup> Also Albanian *më ka marrë uria* (lit. 'me has seized the hunger'), i.e. ABB.

<sup>35</sup> The alternative possibility *έχω πείνα / δίψα* ('I have hunger / thirst') is mentioned only in STANITSAS (n.d.: 114).

<sup>36</sup> Also Turkish *karnum açıldı* (lit. 'my stomach felt hungry').

<sup>37</sup> Also Turkish *bende bir kitap var* (lit. 'in me a book (is) existent'), expressing temporary possession, i.e. ACB.

<sup>38</sup> Also Turkish *haklıyım* (lit. 'right-I am'), i.e. ABA or ACA.

<sup>39</sup> The Modern Hebrew sentences are written respectively <ny r'bv>, <yš ly spr>, and <ny šwdq>.

<sup>40</sup> Modern Standard Arabic (also Classical Arabic).

<sup>41</sup> Also Written Arabic *ma'ī kitābun* (lit. 'with me (is) a book') or *'indī kitābun* (lit. 'at me (is) a book'), expressing temporary possession, i.e. ACC.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Written Arabic *al-ḥāqqu ma'āka* 'ty prav [= you are right]' (BARANOV 1970: 232) lit. 'the truth (is) with you'. Also Written Arabic *'ānta 'alā ḥāqqin* 'ty prav' (IL'-FARXI; KRASNOVSKII & ŠARBATOV 1974: 427, s.v. *prāvij* II), lit. 'you (are) on truth', see also HOLES (1995: 148 c), i.e. ABA or ACA.

<sup>43</sup> Also Palestinian Arabic *ma'ī kitāb* (lit. 'with me (is) (a) book'), expressing temporary possession, i.e. ACC.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Palestinian Arabic *el-ḥāqq mā'ak* 'tu as raison', i.e. 'le droit, le vrai est avec toi' (ELIHAI 1985: 328).

<sup>45</sup> Also Egyptian Arabic *llyya kitāb*, *ma'āya kitāb*, or *wayyāya kitāb*, cf. "*li, wāyya* and *mā'a* are often used in a similar way to *'ānd*, *li* generally being used with reference to property and translatable by 'to own, possess', and *wāyya* and *mā'a* usually relating to small, portable objects carried on the person"

(MITCHELL 1962: 55), i.e. ACB.

<sup>46</sup> Also Egyptian Arabic *llyya ḥāqq* (lit. 'to me (is) (a) book'), cf. "*'āndu ḥāqq* 'he is (lit. has) right'", and *'lak ḥāqq* 'you are right'" (MITCHELL 1956/1978: 29, and n. 3).

<sup>47</sup> Also Moroccan Arabic *m'āya kitāb* (lit. 'with me (is) (a) book'), i.e. ACB or ACC.

<sup>48</sup> Also Moroccan Arabic *m'āya l-ḥāqq* (lit. 'with me (is) the right'), cf. Maghrebi Arabic *'ānd-ak l-ḥāqq* or *el-ḥāqq m'ak* 'tu as raison' (CANAMAS; NEYRENEUF & VILLET 1985: 62).

## 3.3. Conclusions

Though it is not possible here to comment on all the data thoroughly, it is worth mentioning some aspects concerning the Arabic and Maltese structures. It is frequently said that Arabic has no HABERE verb. This is surely true for Classical (Written) Arabic, but the modern varieties seem to have developed a sort of HABERE verb since they have specialised a structure made up of a locative preposition (Classical Arabic 'inda 'at the place of') plus the personal pronominal suffixes, or, alternatively, of a preposition of accompaniment (Classical Arabic *ma'a* 'with'). This is CAUBET's description of Moroccan Arabic *'and-*:

Il s'agit d'une tournure prépositionnelle qui est utilisée comme prédicat de possession *'and-i* (chez moi) "j'ai". [...] La verbalisation de cette expression de localisation est très avancée, puisque, d'une part, on a un véritable paradigme qui est devenue une conjugaison, et que, d'autre part, l'ordre de phrase a été définitivement renversé. (AM II, CAUBET 1993: 51)

It is not therefore surprising to find the following definition from a textbook of Maltese concerning the prepositions *ghand* ['ant] 'at (the house of)' and the less commonly used *b(i)* 'with, by' + pronominal suffixes:

Il-Preposizzjoni *ghand* u *bi* bis-suffissi pronominali ninqdeu bihom bhala *verbi*:  
Ez. *ghandi l-ghuħ*; *bini l-ghatx*. (BROTHER HENRY 1980: 193).<sup>51</sup>

A diachronic explanation of Maltese *ghand*-constructions has been given by COMRIE (1981: 212-218) from a typological viewpoint. The remarkable differences between Maltese and Classical (Written) Arabic in the locative and possessive constructions are well explained by COMRIE by means of a set of tests concerning tense, agreement, subject and object properties, and negation.

However, it is clear that Maltese has gone beyond the limits of the other Arabic varieties in its extensive use of the cognate of Classical Arabic *'inda* 'at'. The crucial role of Maltese *ghand* is reinforced by the fact that the cognate of Classical Arabic *ma'a*

<sup>49</sup> Also *kien bil-ghuħ* 'to be hungry' (lit. '(he) was with the hunger'), cf. *m'intex bil-ghuħ* 'I am not hungry' (MED I, AQUILINA 1987: 413) or *qabaadni l-ghuħ* 'I am feeling hungry' (MED II, AQUILINA 1990: 1098), lit. 'seized me the hunger', i.e. ABB. I do not consider the Maltese construction *kien bil-ghuħ* equivalent to Portuguese *estar com fome* 'to be hungry' (lit. 'to stay=be with hunger') because I believe that in Maltese *bil-ghuħ* 'hungry' (lit. 'with the hunger') is fully lexicalised, i.e. ABB.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Maltese *ghandek ragun* 'you are right' (MED II, AQUILINA 1990: 968).

'with' has no equivalent possessive use even though in Biblical Maltese one can find a sentence as *il-haqq mieghek* 'thou art just'<sup>52</sup> translating New Testament Greek *δικαιος εἶ* ('You are just in these judgments', in the New International Version of 1978). On the one hand there is no doubt that in expressing 'to be right' via a possessive construction Maltese reveals a Romance influence, as clearly shown by the borrowing *ragun* from Sicilian *ragiuni*. On the other hand there is no sure evidence that an analogous influence was ever exerted on the other Arabic varieties which have the same possessive construction, such as Egyptian Arabic *'andi haqq* or Moroccan Arabic *'andi l-haqq*. A similar construction can be found also in the Persian Gulf, cf. Bahraini Arabic (Shiite variety) *intun lekum hakk fi dak* (lit. 'you (PL) to you (is) right in that') 'you are right in that' (HOLES 1995: 148).<sup>53</sup>

Statistics can provide us with a more reliable basis for our discussion, even though the samples are unbalanced. Let us compare the different types found in the data (the figures in brackets regard the alternative possibilities present in some languages):

## Non-Mediterranean languages

ACA	-(+1)	= -% (+5.5%)
ABA	3 (+2)	= 16.7% (+11.1%)
ABC	-(+2)	= -% (+11.1%)
ACB	-(+1)	= -% (+5.5%)
CBA	2 (+2)	= 11.1% (+11.1%)
ABB	7 (+2)	= 38.9% (+11.1%)
BBA	-(+1)	= -% (+5.5%)
BBC	1	= 5.5%
CBB	1 (+2)	= 5.5% (+11.1%)
BBB	4	= 22.2%
	18	= 99.9%

<sup>51</sup> 'The Prepositions *ghand* ['at, to'] and *bi* ['with, by'] with pronominal suffixes: we use them likeverbs. E.g. *ghandi l-ghuħ* ['I'm hungry']; *bini l-ghatx* ['I'm thirsty']'. See also SUTCLIFFE (1936: 200): "*bini l-ghatx* I am thirsty; *kien bini l-ghuħ* I was hungry".

<sup>52</sup> *Apocalypse (Revelation)* 16, 5 (MED I, AQUILINA 1987: 499).

<sup>53</sup> A Persian influence can be excluded because 'he's right' is translated into Persian by *u mohegg ast* or *zihagg ast*, lit. 'he right is', with Arabic loanwords (written respectively <mhqq> and <dyhqq>), or *u dor-ost miguyad*, lit. 'he rightly says'.

## Mediterranean languages

	NW	NE	S		
ABA	-	-(+4)	1 (+1)	= 1 (+5)	= 3.6% (+21.4%)
ACA	-	-(+1)	-(+1)	= - (+2)	= -% (+7.1%)
ABC	-	-	2	= 2	= 7.1%
ACB	-	-(+1)	-(+2)	= - (+3)	= -% (+10.7%)
ACC	-	-	-(+3)	= - (+3)	= -% (+10.7%)
ABB	1	6 (+1)	2 (+2)	= 9 (+3)	= 32.1% (+10.7%)
CBB	1	1	-	= 2	= 7.1%
BBB	12 (+1)	1	1	= 14 (+1)	= 50% (+3.6%)
	14	8	6	= 28	= 99.9%

Type ACC is not found in Non-Mediterranean languages, types CBA, BBA, and BBC are not found in Mediterranean languages.

The most interesting figures are the percentage of ABB in Non-Mediterranean languages (38.9% + 11.1%) and that of BBB in Mediterranean languages (50% + 3.6%).

Even though we have to admit that all these observations are too weak an argument in order to support a specific typological affinity among the languages of the Mediterranean area, we believe that the convergence in the expression for 'to be right' both on the Northern and the Southern banks of the Mediterranean Sea is not due to mere chance. A Northern starting point could be located in the Rhine Valley, if one considers that most of the Romance words for 'reason' have an Old French origin (including Maltese, via Sicilian). Some Mediterranean languages may have been influenced by Old Provençal and Old French (in the Iberian Peninsula, including Basque via Old Castilian).

As for the alternative expression in Written Arabic, *'anta 'alā haqqin* 'you're right' (lit. 'you (are) on right'), it is worth mentioning that similar expressions are found in Finnish (*olet oikeassa*, lit. 'you are in right'), English (*you are in the right*), Serbo-Croat (*u pravo si*, lit. 'in (the) right you are'), and (Old) Italian (*sei nel giusto*, lit. 'you are in the right').

## Abbreviations

ACC	accusative	OBJ	object
ADESS	adessive case	POSM	possessum
ADJ	adjective	POSR	possessor
ADV	adverb	PP	prepositional phrase
ARG	argument	PRED	predicate
GEN	genitive	PROGR	progressive
EXPER	experient <sup>d</sup>	PRON	pronoun
F	feminine	REFL	reflexive
FEEL	feeling	SG	singular
IPFV	imperfective	SUBJ	subject
LOC	location/locative	V, VB	verb
N	noun	VP	verb phrase
NP	noun phrase		

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