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Review Article

Lexical Remarks Prompted by *A Smyrneika Lexicon*, a Trove for Contact Linguistics

EPHRAIM NISSAN
Goldsmiths College, London

Abstract We consider a new lexicon of the pre-1922 Smyrniot Greek (*Smyrneika*) vernacular, which had a composite speaking community — not only local Greeks, but also local “Levantine” of “Frankish” (e.g., Italian) background — it was in fact the Levantines who kept the dialect alive in Smyrna until the 1960s, after 1922. The book under review is of great interest for contact linguistics, because of the French, Italian, and Turkish etyma of many lexical items. The present study also includes a sequence of lexical studies, prompted by entries in *A Smyrneika Lexicon*, but spanning various languages and cultures between Italy and the Middle East.

Keywords Contact linguistics, Smyrna, Greek, Italian, Turkish, Semitic languages

George Galdies, Alessandro Baltazzi, and George Poulimenos, *A Smyrneika Lexicon: The Language of Smyrna (Izmir, Turkey) Explained and Illustrated*, Second Edition (New Monographs in Linguistics), Piscataway, New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2014, xxiv + 211 pages, hardcover – ISBN: 978-1-4632-0251-4.

1. Smyrniot Greek, Its Speakers, and *A Smyrneika Lexicon*

“*Smyrneika* (or *Smyrniotika*) was the everyday language of old Smyrna, a Greek idiom with some similarities to the dialect of Chios. Through the ages, Smyrniots referred to their language as *Romeika*: the Greek language of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium), from which *Smyrneika* has derived. The idiom’s grammar and syntax are that [*recte*: those] of common Greek with some small differences; in contrast, many words are the result of a fusion between different language sources” (xvii). Source

languages included French, Italian and Turkish. For example, just like in Italian, a cry for help in Smyrneika was *aiuto!* (3), or then, take *basta* ‘stop!’ in Smyrneika from Italian *basta!* ‘enough!’ (11), or then again, Smyrneika *facce scure* “long faces, desperate people” (31) — literally in Italian: ‘dark faces’ — whereas in Smyrneika, *apartaménto* denoted “apartment, also applied to the entire building” (5), as opposed to *appartamento* in Italian, which only denotes an apartment (a flat). Sometimes the loanword in Smyrneika sounds more similar to the original than it does in standard Modern Greek: “**birbántis** / **bribántis** = scallywag. From It. *birbante* = rogue. Gr: *berbándis*” (14). Some lexical items from Smyrneika have Greek etyma that survived there, but not in Greece (xvii).

Moreover, sometimes the semantic delimitation of a loanword is different in Smyrneika and standard Modern Greek; Italian *arrivare* ‘to arrive’ is derived from *riva* ‘coast’, so in Modern Greek *arivaró* denotes “to arrive (for ships)” (6), whereas in Smyrneika the sense is as broad as in Italian, ‘to arrive’, a sense which in standard Modern Greek is denoted by *ftáno* (6). Some other times, there is a semantic shift with respect to the source language; whereas *favourites* (from French *favoris*) denotes ‘sideburns’ in both Smyrneika (32) and standard Modern Greek, in Smyrneika ‘sideburns’ were also denoted by *báffes*, from Italian *baffi* ‘moustache’ (9). *A Smyrneika Lexicon* has entries for both *kanokiália*, “binoculars, but also used for a telescope. From It. *cannocchiale* = telescope” (54), and *fistalóna* or *vistalóna*, “telescope, binoculars. From It. *vista* = view¹ + *longa* = far” (34), even though in Italian *vista lunga* or *vista longa* is not used for denoting optical instruments. In the book, there is mention of variation within Smyrneika: “In some cases ‘b’ and ‘p’ were interchangeable, according to the area of the city where the speaker lived” (9).

Peter Golden explained (1985 [1987], pp. 44–45): “Greek survived up to the twentieth century in Anatolia, but only in strength in the Pontus (where the Turkish conquest was not as disruptive) and in a weaker state in Cappadocia (some 20 villages around Kayseri and Niğde), some 6 villages

1 There was a posh neighbourhood, Bella Vista (literally, ‘fair view’), in Smyrna. In South Easty London there is a neighbourhood called *Belvedere*, but it is in the marshes, and is the locale of Victorian sewage works (the Crossness Pumping Station in Belvedere Road), constructed between 1859 and 1865, and now considered a monument (the interior, “The Octagon” was deliberately fashioned by the architect Charles H. Driver as the interior of a cathedral). <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crossness_Pumping_Station>

southeast of there (= Pharasa), some villages between Cappadocia and the Pontus (Şebin Karahisar) and in scattered villages near Konya (Sille or Silili), Alaşehir/Philadelphia/(Gölde) and Livisi (= Kaya, near Fethiye). The Greek population of the Ionian coast (Izmir [and] Çanakkale [on the Dardanelles] etc.) of Ottoman times were later settlers from Greece proper”.

A Smyrneika Lexicon, which among the other things comprises several photographs of pre-1922 Smyrna, in its bulk is a dictionary of Smyrna Greek, avoiding however “words that could be found in any Greek to English dictionary, and in this sense it purports to be an original work, to a large extent [*recte*: extent] void of common Greek. Nevertheless, we did enter some key words from Greek, Turkish and western European languages that played a major role in the social and economic life of Smyrna of that time” (xvii).

The script in which Smyrneika or even common Greek words appear in the dictionary is a Romanisation. There actually was an antecedent for this, a “Frankish” Romanisation that in its earlier historical stages would have been different from the transcription used in the glossary. “Smyrneika was usually written in the Greek script. However, among Levantines a different script prevailed: ‘Frangochiotika’. This is a phonetic writing of Greek using the Latin script, which had originated in Chios when the island was under Genoese rule, and at a time when it was flourishing as a major trade centre prior to the fulcrum eventually shifting to Smyrna” (xvii–xviii).

Galdies, signing in London in May 2012 the section entitled “On Smyrneika”, points out that in the lexicon, then in the list of proverbs (151–153), a few rhymes (153–154), and in the sample dialogues that follow it, it is “this writing”, i.e. Frangochiotika, that is used. There is a pronunciation guide on p. xxiii, facing a map of Smyrna before the 1922 fire. As for the dialogues that illustrate the vernacular, they are often humorous social situations, and they appear at the end of the book, first in English, then in Smyrneika as written in Frangochiotika, and then in Smyrneika repeated in the Greek script.

Smirneika was spoken also by non-Greek Christians, the Levantines, people originally from Western Europe (the “Frankish” community however was only the Catholics: *Frángos* or *Frágos* or *Frangolevantinos* (35, 36), even though there were Protestants, too),² and this is how the vernacular

2 “Today, only a dozen Catholic and four Anglican-Protestant church buildings survive in the city” (51). Before 1922, there were “several dozen churches from many

managed to somehow survive locally until the 1960s, among the latter community,³ even after the apocalyptic end of the Greek and Armenian communities of Smyrna — an event unimpeded by the Western warships then in Smyrna harbour,⁴ and which the book under review avoids mentioning other than rather diplomatically,⁵ as it also has an audience in Turkey (the acknowledgements, preface, and introduction, and then the section “On Smirneika” of the front matter, appear in both English and Turkish), and unfortunately the Republic of Turkey is still nowhere (or even less than ever in the last several decades) tolerant enough not to resent historical blame to be apportioned. I therefore signal “Inferno in Smyrna”, being Ch. 13 (pp. 299–316) in Friedman (2012).

denominations” (51), and the Orthodox churches did not survive the fire and exodus of 1922. “Catholics, who made up the majority of Levantines, used many religious words of Italian / French origin within Greek phrases, although they would have known most of the corresponding Greek ones” (58), as stated before a lexicon of several such terms within the entry *Katolik* on pp. 58–59. Another entry, *ónoma* ‘name’ (92), comprises an onomastikon of forms of intimacy (hypocoristics) in use among Smyrna Levantines. Yet another entry that comprises a lexicon is *psári* ‘fish’ (106–107), which lists names for fishes and well as marine invertebrates.

- 3 “Smyrneika was commonly spoken in the non-Muslim quarters of Smyrna and its environs as a vehicular language between the various nationalities and ethnicities that formed Smyrna’s cosmopolitan population. It was the mother tongue of Hellenes [i.e., some Greek people who lived in independent Greece] and Ottoman Greeks and even for most Levantines, but even Turks, Armenians and Jews had at least an elementary knowledge of the language, especially those involved in any kind of commercial activity. The language was still spoken by Smyrna Levantines well into the 1960s, when many of them emigrated to all corners of the world, taking with them some rudiments of the language” (xvii).
- 4 After the withdrawal from Anatolia of the overextended Greek army (which had burnt Turkish villages), Turkish troops led by Nurettin entered the city on 9 September 1922, and after wholesale atrocities, Western ships began the evacuation of refugees on the 24th. But men younger than 45 were deported to the interior to serve in labour gang and were not heard of, whereas hundreds of young women were turned into sex slaves. Suicide, of even whole families, was widespread.
- 5 “The Smyrna idiom survived for a time in Greece itself since it was spoken by the refugees who had left Smyrna after its partial destruction in 1922, only to disappear after younger generations were taught a purified version of common Greek in state schools. Meanwhile, several Hellenic writers have used Smyrneika in their poems, novels and reminiscences, among them Sokratis Prokopiou and Kosmas Politis. The idiom has been prevalent in the verses of Rebetiko songs too” (xvii).

Smyrna Levantines are “now less than 0.1% of the Izmir population” (x).

The 19th and early 20th century was the golden age for the Levantines. In Smyrna alone they formed about 10% of the population, controlling a substantial part of the city’s commerce and pioneering in the exploitation of her rich hinterland. The advent of nationalisms, however, would soon bring this era of plenty to an end. Most Levantines left Smyrna after the Great Fire in that fateful September of 1922, but many of them managed to return after a while, [...] Thus it happened that the Greek language, or at least the *Smyrneika* idiom, did not entirely die out in what is now Izmir as a consequence of the compulsory exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey in 1923. (ix)

In *A Smyrneika Lexicon*, one of the lexical entries is one derived from the surname of one of the three authors of the dictionary: “**baltazídhiko** = a lavish mansion. Derived from the mansions of the Levantine *Baltazzi* family, once bankers to the Sultans. Gr: arhondikó (see entry)” (10).

2. A Sequence of Lexical Notes

2.1 Botany

I. The fourth entry in the *Smyrneika* glossary is “**abournéla** = a variety of small plum. From It[alian] *brunella*. Gr[reek]: dhamáskino, korómiilo, bournéla (seldom used). Tur[kish]: bir tür erik” (1). It must be said that the form *brunella* reflects semantic remotivation in Italian, from the dark or “brown” colour of the peel, of *prunella*, a diminutive of *prugna* ‘plum’. The Standard Italian name for ‘plum’ is pronounced pronounced [ˈpruɲña] or, in the North, pronounced [ˈpruɲa]. One does come across an alternation of the initial p with b, in Italian names for ‘plum’ of the Latin type *prunea*. For example, metathesis occurs in the collective rather than singular form *prunga* in some places in eastern Latium (from the towns of Corchiano, Capranica, and Gallese), but one has *prunghi* or *prunga* in Fabrica di Roma, and *bbrunga* in Civita Castellana (Cimarra and Petroselli 2008: 48, 67, 74).

As for Middle and Modern Greek *dhamáskino* δαμάσκινο for ‘plum’ (Kriarás 1968–: vol. 4, pp. 411–412), for which there is an entry in

A Smyrneika Lexicon (24) — cf. *durmasqín* ‘plums’ (*Prunus domestica*) in Rabbinic Hebrew, the etymological sense of *durmasqín* being ‘Damascene [fruits]’. In *A Smyrneika Lexicon*, there is an entry on p. 24 for *dhimiski*, defined as “very strong, water-resistant twine”, with the etymological suggestion: “Possibly originating from Damascus flax” (the same entry points out that in Modern Greek the same lexical concept is denoted by *adhiávrohos spángos*, as well as Turkish names, one of which is the etymologically relevant *tumiški*. Cf. Arabic *dimašqī* ‘of Damascus’).

For a fruit or vegetable to be named after a city in Syria, also consider Iraqi Arabic *raqqī*, a collective name for ‘[sweet dessert] watermelon’ (*Citrullus lanatus*). The singulative singular form (i.e., the name for a single individual watermelon) is *raqqíyya*. Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic has the form *yaqqī*, and the singulative singular is *ḡaqqáyyī*, whereas in Baghdadi Muslim Arabic (which is Bedounised), the singulative singular is *raggíyya*, and the collective is *raggī*. In Arabic however, and this is the etymon indeed, *raqqī* denotes ‘native or inhabitant (m.) of Raqqa’, and *raqqíyya* denotes ‘native or inhabitant (f.) of Raqqa’.⁶ Cf. Paris (2015, p. 145).

Another entry for a plum name in *A Smyrneika Lexicon* is “**bardása / vardhása** = the Damson variety of plum. Perhaps from Armenian *Barda*, both a place and person name. Gr: korómilo” (11). The next entry is “**bar-datzikia** = Smyrna figs when fresh from the tree. Perhaps from Tur. *bardacık* = fig.: sweet fig [sic], possibly influenced by Gr. *síko* = fig (alternatively, see above under *bardása*). Gr: fréska sika” (11): that same entry continues with the Turkish name, and then an explanation about varieties of Smyrna figs, along with mention of the amount of dried figs exported from Smyrna in 1892 (mostly to the United Kingdom).

II. Persian *zardālū* ‘yellow plum’ is the etymon of Turkish *zerdali* ‘apricot’, whence the dialectal Modern Greek word *zerdalí* or *zarthalóudhi* in Thrace, whereas in the dialect of Smyrna one finds *zartalódhi* or *zantaloú-dhi* “apricot, especially a kind with bitter kernel. Also dried apricot” (148, s.v. *zartalódhi* / *zantaloú-dhi*). In contrast, in Smyrna Modern Greek *kaisí*

6 Raqqa is the Syrian city on the Euphrates now unfortunately made notorious because the extremely violent organisation Isis has made it its capital. The city, known as Callinicum, also made the news as a hotbed for hotheads in Roman imperial times ca. 388, when a mob there burnt down a synagogue, and St Ambrose of Milan boasted to Theodosius I (in *Epistulae variae* 40) that he, Ambrose, was claiming responsibility for the arson event.

“apricot, especially those with a sweet kernel, From Tur[kish] *kayısı* = apricot” (52, s.v.). The standard Modern Greek word for ‘apricot’ (of any kind) is *veríkoko* (ultimately from the same etymon as English *apricot* and Italian *albicocca*), but Modern Greek also has the word *kaisí*.

The last entry in the often elusive list of fruit trees (Nissan and Burgaretta, in press) in the *Life of Ben Sira* — a humorous medieval Hebrew book (comprising a list of questions which Nebuchadnezzar asks the child prodigy Ben Sira), apparently originating in Caliphal Mesopotamia and which later spread in two main version around the Mediterranean and in Ashkenazic communities — is the plural form ‘*alusim*, which is a hapax in Hebrew lexicography. I suggest that the most likely identification of ‘*alusim* is with a kind of yellow plum, called *ālū-zard* in Modern Persian. Persian *zard* means ‘yellow’, so *ālū-zard* literally means ‘yellow plum’. But *aliç* in Turkish denotes the azerole (*Crataegus azarolus*).

III. Concerning Greek *mespilon* ‘medlar’ (*Mespilus germanica*), consider that Modern Greek has *móusmoulo* ‘medlar’ (bilabial *p* > bilabial *m*), from which Turkish has for ‘medlar’ the name *muşmula* with the stress on the first syllable. In the Lesbos and Smyrna dialects of Modern Greek however, the name for ‘medlar’ is *frangómilo* — “loquat, medlar (fruits). There were many in the gardens of Boudja” (36) — lit. ‘Frankish apple’ (36, s.v. *frangómilo*). Medlars are known as *nèspole* in Italian: now only rarely found on the market, whereas at present one does find on the market the loquat, or Japanese medlar, called *nèspola del Giappone* in Italian.

This review article is on a volume about the Smyrna dialect of Modern Greek, but I would like to signal another interesting name for ‘medlar’ from elsewhere in the Mediterranean. As shown by Burgaretta (2015: 70), in Judaeo-Arabic from Sicily (whose Jews were expelled in 1492) or Malta one comes across a compound noun being a loanword from Maltese *fomm il-lipp*, and written in the Hebrew script as פֹּוּם אֵל לֹוּף (*fūm el-lūpp*). The sense is ‘medlars’. The literal sense of the compound is ‘mouth of the *ləpp*’, that is to say, ‘mouth of the wolf’. In Maltese, the names for ‘wolf’ are *dib* (whose etymology is Arabic), and the Romance loanword *lipp*, the latter being the present-day form the word has taken, whereas historically in Maltese it used to be *lup* or *lupp*. The plural is morphologically Semiticised, being an Arabic broken plural word-form: *lpup* or *lupup* (Dario Burgaretta in *litteram*, 13 May 2016).

IV. In Turkish, *yarma* denotes ‘splitting’. This is the etymon of the noun *yarmás* in Modern Greek (it is also found in the Smyrna dialect of Greek), which like Turkish *yarma şeftali*, denotes “a variety of large peach, where the flesh easily detaches from the stone” (146, s.v. *yarmás*). Italian has the adjective *spiccagnolo* (also *spicco* or *spiccate* or *spiccatoio*: see s.vv. in Devoto and Oli’s 1968) for such varieties of fruits that their flesh can be easily detached from their stone, e.g., *pesche spiccagnole* or *pesche spiccaci* for such peaches, as opposed to other peach varieties whose stone cannot be detached easily. In his *Dizionario Abruzzese e Molisano*, Ernesto Giammarco (1976, vol. 3, 1512), s.v. *pèrzachə*, also lists forms for the compound which in standard Italian (and this is his definition indeed) is called “pèsca spiccate”: *pèrzəca spaccarèllə*, *pèrsəcə spaccarèllə*, and so forth. Cf. Battaglia (1961–2002: vol. 19, 881), s.v. *spiccate*, “agg. Che ha polpa agevolmente staccabile dal nocciolo (una pesca, una susina, ecc.)”; s.v. *spiccacciòlo*, “agg. Disus. Spiccatoio, spiccate (un frutto), citing the Tommaseo dictionary (Tommaseo and Bellini, 1861–1874), s.v. (who applies it to *pesca*), and the Tramater dictionary (Liberatore 1829–1840), s.v., who offers as synonyms *stacciamani* and *spiccatoia*, applies to a peach. Battaglia, s.v. *spiccagnolo*, cites Gargioli: “Si chiama in Firenze ‘spiccagnola’ la pèsca ‘burrona’”. Cf. Battaglia, s.v. *spiccaggine*, “agg. Tosc. Spiccatoio, spiccate”, quoting a definition from Fanfani (“si dice quella specie di pesca, morbida di polpa, che si spicca facilmente di sul nocciolo con le dita”) and Petrocchi, s.v., who claims the term is from Pistoia. Girolamo Gargioli⁷ was born in Fivizzano (in northwestern Tuscany) in 1796 and died in Florence in 1869, and was both a scholar and a politician, but the quotation in Battaglia is from a 15th century treatise (*L’Arte della seta in Firenze*) which Gargioli published in 1868 in one volume with *Dialoghi*, and the quotation is from the *Dialoghi* indeed (Gargioli 1868: 261). Beppe and Francesco define vernacular terms, such as words for ‘foundling’:

FRANCESCO. « *Spedalino*. Nel senese è il gettatello, tolto dallo Spedale. »

BEPPE. Noi innocentino, e in campagna *birchio*. E *spedalino* è il praticante di chirurgia a Santa Maria Nuova.

FRANCESCO. « *Spiccate*: aggiunto di pèsca indicante una qualità di tal frutto che si spicca lievemente, e si separa dal nòcciolo:altrove *partitoia*, e il contrario *duracine*. »

7 <https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Girolamo_Gargioli>

BEPPE. Si chiama in Firenze *spiccagnola* la pèsca burrona, e la *cotogna* non si spicca. Duracine poi si dice d'una ciliegia piccola e soda, che ha una puntina opposta al gambo.

V. In Modern Greek, *fistiki* ‘pistachio’ (from Turkish *fistik*), but the sense can also be ‘peanut’ (as Galdies et al. remark on p. 34), which is something also known from Arabic and Turkish.

An extended sense is also found in Syriac. In Syriac one finds a similar semantic extension, reflected in a compound. In a list of correspondence between Greek and Syriac plant names as found in Syriac authors, Löw (1924–1934), in Vol. 4 (1934, pp. 130–134), he included the pair “myrobalanos מִיִּרְבָּנִים” (*ibid.*, p. 132).

In spoken Arabic, *fāstaq ḥālabī* (lit. ‘pistachios of Aleppo’) is the collective name for ‘pistachios’, but in Iraq, peanuts’ are called *fāstaq Bōmbay*, lit. ‘pistachios of Bombay’ (reflecting Iraq’s extensive trade with India, in which Jews has much part). As for Italian, Battaglia (1961–2002: vol. 13, 570–571), s.v. *pistacchio*, lists after the entry’s headword the old forms *pestacchio* and *pistachio*, and the text of the definition mentions that the fruit is called (as well as *pistachio*, as usual) also *pistaccia*, and that in Italy the plant is grown almost exclusively in Sicily. Of the historical exemplification, we mention (in verse by F. Alberti) “datteri con pistacchi di Soria” (i.e., “of Syria”) in rhyme, but which dovetails with historical perceptions of origin (cf. *supra*, in Arabic ‘pistachios of Aleppo’).

Battaglia has on p. 571 also an entry for the old term *pistaccia* (from Late Latin), recorded in Italian in Palladio), pistachios are typically propagated by grafting, and Palladio refers to that practice as opposed to sowing chestnuts, but elsewhere Palladio strangely writes: “E innestasi la pistaccia, cioè ’l castagno”, but arguably, on the evidence of his former mention, he didn’t synonymise the two phytonyms. Battaglia, s.v. *pistachio*, etymologises on p. 571 from Medieval Latin *pistachius* (recorded in 1289 in Venice) = Classical Latin *pistacium* < Greek πιστάκιον (and πιστάκη), of oriental origin. Historically in Greek, apart from the form πιστάκιον and πιστάκη, also the forms βιστάκιον, φιστάκιον, and φιστάκιον are recorded.

Relevantly to the perceived locale in Syria, Battaglia’s quotes from G.F. Morosini, “Oltre alla grandissima abbondanza di viveri di tutte le sorte, può mandar fuori di Costantinopoli lane, cuoi, pelli e ciambellotti; [...] dalla Soria sete, zenzeri, spezierie, cotonei, galle, filati, pestacchi,

cotonine, mussoline e tappeti”, and from the Roman-based physician Castor Durante:⁸ “Nascono i pistacchi in Persia, in Arabia e Siria donde furon portati in Italia. Ritrovassene a Venezia, a Gaeta et a Napoli”. As for denoting ‘peanuts’ by means of a compound comprising a name for ‘pistachio’, this is found in Italian indeed: s.v. acceptance 4, Battaglia has the compound *pistachio di terra* for ‘peanut’.⁹ For the element *di terra* in that compound, there is a parallel in Modern Hebrew, which at present has *boṭnīm* as the colloquial and unmarked term for ‘peanuts’, and has in that sense the acrolectal *ēgozei adamá*, literally ‘nuts of earth/ground’.

In his *Sino-Iranica*, Laufer (1919, p. 252) listed, from various languages, names for ‘pistachios’: “The Persian word *pista* (also *pasta*) has been widely disseminated: we find it in Kurd *fystiq*, Armenian *fesdux* [where *x* stands for *kh*] and *fstoül*, Arabic *fistaq* or *fustaq*, Osmanli *fistiq*, and Russian *fistaška*.” As for Chinese, “It would not be impossible that the transcription *pi-se-ta*, accurately corresponding to Persian *pista*, was made in the Mongol period; for it bears the ear-marks of the Yüan [i.e., Mongol period] style of transcription.”

In present-day Italian *pistacchi* ‘pistachios’. The Florentine well-travelled merchant Francesco Balducci Pegolotti (fl. 1310–1347), in his *Pratica della mercatura* (compiled between 1335 and 1343), is important also for lexicography. The word *fistuchi* for ‘pistachios’ is recorded in Pegolotti,¹⁰ where the word occurs fairly often. Moreover, Pegolotti, ed. Evans (1936: 55, 58) referred by *fistichini* to what Allan Evans in his glossary renders as “*Pistache-green Cloths*” (Pegolotti, ed. Evans, 1936: 425).

The context of *fistuchi* in Pegolotti *Pratica della mercatura* is as follows, beginning with: “Fistuchi, e dassi con esso il sacco e non se ne fa tara, salvo s’avessono più d’uno sacco per pondo sì si farebbe tara del piue, e l’uno rimane al comperatore per niente” (Pegolotti, ed. Evans, 1936,

8 The physician Castor Durante (1586, p. 158) lists two Italian names for ‘pistachios’: “Ital. *Pistacchi*, & *Fistici*.” The latter reminds of the Modern Greek form *fistiki* and of Turkish *fistik*.

9 In Battaglia (1961–2002: vol. 13, p. 571), s.v. *pistachio*, acceptance 5, the compound *pistachio di monte* (in use in the Pisa area along with the synonym *nocciola pistachina*) denotes the species *Corylus avellana*, for which cf. Battaglia entry for the adjective and noun *pistachino* (*ibid.*, 570).

10 In *Sino-Iranica*, Laufer (1919, p. 252, note 5) misspells *Pegoletti*: “Hence Pegoletti’s *fistuchi* (YULE, Cathay, new ed. by CORDIER, Vol. III, p. 167)” (citing Yule 1913–1916). This was a note to Ottoman Turkish *fistiq*.

p. 24). Then in chapter 56, “Alessandria”, Pegolotti enumerates staples sold in Alexandria by Egypt according to the different units of weight by which they are sold; of the weight units called *qantār*, he lists three: “Cantare forfori, cantare gerui, cantare leuedi”. Of these, most staples are sold by the *cantar gerui* (“A cantar gerui si vende”), and the word *fistuchi* appears there (*ibid.*, p. 70). Chapter 64 is about Cyprus (“Cipri”). One finds there *fistuchi* enumerated among other staples (between *sapone* ‘soap’ and *zibibbo* ‘sultana’) under the rubric “A cantara di peso e a pregio di bisanti si vendono in Cipri” (*ibid.*: 77). When he lists custom duty for various staples, he states: “Fistuchi, karati 12 per sacco” (*ibid.*, p. 86). In the chapter about Sicily (“Cicilia”), under the rubric “Mercatantia che si vendono a Messina a cantara sottile” one finds: “Fistuchi e fassi tara del sacco; galla e dassi sacco per galla, e se tenesse terra o mondizia se ne farebbe tara” (*ibid.*, p. 108). In the chapter about Venice (“Vinegia”), *fistuchi* is listed under the rubric “A centinaio si vende” (*ibid.*, p. 138).

When dealing with Bruges, under the rubric “Quello che si paga senseraggio di mercantia e di cambio in Bruggia” (i.e., Bruges) about duties, Pegolotti states that *fistuchi* are included in the category of spices: “Gherofani e tutte spezierie sottile, denari 2 tornesi piccioli per libbra, e di denari 15 de’ detti tornesi piccioli 1 grosso tornese d’argento. E in queste spezierie per erro fu messo zettoaro e fistuchi, e però in sul fare del mercato se puoi sì si vuol essere in accordo col curattiere del curattaggio di queste minute spezierie acciò che se puoi ne paghi meno, e se non si ti converrebbe pagare lo ’ntero” (*ibid.*, p. 243).

And indeed, Pegolotti’s category “Spezierie” is broad, and in his chapter “SPEZIERIE cioè nomi di spezierie, e tutte quelle che averanno il punto di capo s’intende che sieno spezierie minute”, being an alphabetised list of qualifying staples, *Fistuchi* is listed (*ibid.*, p. 294). Notwithstanding such inclusion, the sense ‘pistachios’ is certain. The next two items are edible vegetables indeed: “Finocchi nostrali” (“our local fennels” and “Finocchi di Tunizi” (“Tunisian fennels”).

In chapter 308, Pegolotti teaches how to evaluate quantities staple by staple, when unable to weight (“AVISAMENTO DI SAPERE COMPERARE E VENDERE SPEZIERIE A MISURA DI GRANO quando l’uomo si trovasse in parte ove non avesse o non potesse avere peso da potere pesare”): the unit of volume is the *cafisso*, and the equivalent weight is indicated for the particular staple. Concerning pistachios, we are told: “Il cafisso de’ fistuchi pesa occhie 11” (*ibid.*, p. 306).

In his edition of Pegolotti's *Pratica della mercatura*, Allan Evans included at the end of glossary with definitions in English. S.v. *Fistuchi*, after the definition "*Pistachioes*",¹¹ Evans added a medieval Latin quotation: "*Pistacia grece. arabice pistoch sive fustech sive fistach: latine fistica*", citing "Md, 592; see also Yt, iii, 167" (Pegolotti 1936, p. 418). "Md" stands for Matthaeus Silvaticus, *Liber Pandectarum Medicine* (Venice, by Johann of Cologne and Johann Manthen, 1480).¹² "Yt" stands for Sir Henry Yule's *Cathay and the Way Thither*, as revised by Henri Cordier (Yule 1913–1916).

Concerning words for 'pistachio' in Italian dialects, Nissan and Burgettta (in press) — in a study especially concerned with Judaeo-Italian glosses in the Hebrew script (which we have tentatively ascribed to the Abruzzi region or eastern Latium) to the medieval Hebrew book *The Life of Ben Sira* — remarked as follows:

The absence of the letter *yod* as a *mater lectionis* for [i] after the letter *pe* let us rather incline towards reading the Italian term as *fastuche* or *fastuchi*, preferably to *fistuchi*. And indeed, the form *fastuche* is recorded in Judaeo-Italian, e.g. in Moses of Rieti one finds the plural *fastuche* (Hijmans-Tromp 1989: 457 in the glossary, and 353 § 433 in the text). Consider Old Sicilian *festuca* (Leone 1990: 113) and Modern Sicilian *fastuca* (Vårvaro 2014: vol. 1, 366–367): Vårvaro supplies much information of interest concerning similar forms, from both Sicilian (e.g. *fistuca* or *pastuca*), and other varieties of Italian, as well as from other Romance languages. For Sicilian, also consider Piccitto et al. (1977–2002), s.v. *fastuca*,¹³ denoting both the plant and the tree of *Pistacia vera*,¹⁴ and usually employed as a collective name; whereas in order

11 The Balducci Pegolotti source can be accessed online at the OVI website of Italy's Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche. Moreover, a lexicographic entry about *fistuchi* in Pegolotti can be accessed at <<http://www.um.es/lexico-comercio-medieval/index.php/v/lexico/8785/fistuchi>> as being part of Miguel Gual Camarena, *Vocabulario de Comercio Medieval*, Legado Gual Camarena (Universidad de Murcia); "Referencias documentales de «Fistuchi». Fichas de la voz «Fistuchi», extraídas del archivo del profesor Gual y pendiente de su mecanografiado". The handwritten entry by Miguel Gual Camarena renders the fruit name with *alfoncigo* or *pistachio*, and quotes the English form *pistachioes* from Evans, before providing cross-references to passages in Pegolotti's text.

12 Evans in Pegolotti (1936) also calls him "Matthew Silvaticus".

13 Sicilian variants of *fastuca* are *fastucca* and *frastuca* (Piccitto et al. 1977–2002: s.v. *fastuca*).

14 The wild species *Pistacia therebintus* is called in Sicilian *fastuca màscula* or *fastuca masculina* or *fastuca sarvåggia* (Piccitto et al. 1977–2002: s.v. *fastuca*). The systematics and phylogenesis of the genus *Pistacia* are the subject of Kafkas (2006) as well as of a study by Moshe Inbar (2008).

to refer to an individual tree, one would say *ped'i fastuca*, or *fastucaru*, or *frastucara* (sic), and to refer to an individual fruit, one says *cocc'i fastuca* (*ibid.*).

In the Italian botanical glosses to the *Life of Ben Sira*, the pseudo-Hebrew word פִּינְסִיִּקִין *pynsyqyn* (**pinsiqin* — an otherwise unknown term) is claimed to equate פִּשְׁטוּקִי *pštʷqy* (**fistuchi* [likely] or **pistocchi* [quite unlikely]). But in the list of Hebrew fruit names, there does occur the word פִּסְתִּיקִין *psytqyn* which is presumably to be read *pistaqin* ‘pistachios’, arguably corresponding to the form *psittacium* as known from Latin. Concerning the lexical type *pistachio*, consider the following from p. 251 in Laufer’s *Sino-Iranica*: “The Japanese name *fusudasiu* or *fusudasu* is doubtless connected with Persian *pista*, from Old Iranian **pistaka*, Middle Persian **pistak*, from which is derived Greek βιστάκιον, φιστάκιον, πιστάκιον or φιστάκιον, Latin *psittacium*, and our *pistacia* or *pistachio*.” (Laufer recognised that pistachios were introduced to Japan by Europeans.) The Latin form *psittacium* is quite interesting for our purposes, because the position of the vowel *i* is precisely what we find in the term in the *Life of Ben Sira*. I wonder whether in Latin, there was folk-etymological attraction to the name for parrots, as though pistachios were nuts liked by parrots.

VI. An entry on p. 2 states: “**agóuri** = cucumber. From Gr[EEK] *ághouros* = unripe, whence It[alian] *anguria* = watermelon. Same in [Modern] Gr[EEK], i.e., *agoúri* = cucumber]. Tur[kish]: *salatalık*” (which in turn denotes ‘cucumber’, but properly of the category whose technical name in English is ‘slicing cucumber’, for eating raw such as in a salad). A distinction is to be borne in mind, between the cucumber proper, and the kind of vegetable which when sold in London at Greek and Turkish shops, is called *crooked cucumbers* in English. Or more generally, varieties of non-sweet elongated melon, rather than a cucumber proper, which they are not. In the United States, the name Armenian cucumber is used, but it suits the longer, sometimes crooked varieties, not the shorter kinds known as *adjur* among botanists.

In Modern Greek, one such variety is called αντζούρι, a name itself derived (involving unvoicing) from an earlier stage of the Turkish term, ‘*ajjūr* (*acur* in present-day Turkish romanised spelling) which when spelled in the Arabic alphabet (عجور) begins by the pharyngeal ‘*ayin*, and yet its etymology is apparently (by assimilation of the middle cluster)

from Greek ἀγγούριον or ἀγγούρια (which in turn, gave rise to Italian *angúria* which in some areas of Italy has come to denote ‘watermelon’). Cf. “*‘aggūr* ἀγγούριον?” in Löw (1924–1934), in Vol. 1 (1926: 534). Cf. Egyptian Arabic (as indeed, in Egypt the pronunciation of the Arabic letter *jīm* is not palatalised). It stands to reason however that Modern Greek Αγγούρι would have developed from the Turkish word when it already displayed palatalisation, but not yet assimilation of the *n* into the palatal consonant following it. The gloss *anguria* is found (Löw, *ibid.*) in the writings of the Karaite author Caleb Afendopoulo (near Constantinople, 1464? – Belgrade, 1525).

VII. On p. 10 in A Smyrneika Lexicon, there is the entry “**bakális** = grocer. From Tur. *bakkal*. Gr: pandopólis, bakális.” The Turkish term is from Arabic *baqqāl*, for ‘grocer’. *Bājǎlla* is the Muslim Iraqī Arabic collective name for ‘broadbeans’, whereas the Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic word is *baqqǎlli*, from Latin *bacillum* ‘pod’. In present-day Italian, the lexical concept ‘pod’ (of vegetables) is denoted by the noun *baccello* [ba’tšello], whose etymon is Latin *bacillum* ‘pod’ (akin to another Latin diminutive: *bàculum* ‘little rod’). The Latin *bacillum* ‘pod’, in which the *c* was pronounced as *k* until late in Roman imperial times, gave rise in Arabic to terms for legumes with pods, on the evidence of the Iraqī names for ‘broadbeans’. Note however that in Arabic, the agent noun *baqqāl* denotes ‘grocer’, not ‘greengrocer’.¹⁵

In Italian, *sérqua* means either ‘dozen’ or ‘a great number’. The noun *sérqua* is from Latin *siliqua* denoting ‘pod’ of vegetables, and whose plural *siliquae* denotes ‘legumes’. In Ethiopia, Amharic (a Semitic language) has *baqela* for ‘broadbean’, whereas Galla (not a Semitic language) has for that same sense the noun *baqila*, and Strelcyn (1978, p. 259) states that the Galla term was borrowed from either Amharic, or the Arabic *bāqilā*. Note however that in both the Amharic and Galla languages of the Horn of Africa, *boqollo* denotes “grand maïs”, according to Strelcyn’s (*ibid.*) French definition, whereas in the Borana dialect of Galla, the word is *badalla*, signalled by Strelcyn (*ibid.*) as an example of etymologically difficult situations. (No relation to Ge‘ez, i.e., Classical Ethiopian, *bāqālt* for ‘date-palm’).

15 In Smyrneika, a greengrocer is called a *manávis*, from Turkish *manav*; standard Modern Greek has in the same sense both *manávis*, and *oporopólis* (82).

2.2 Zoology

One also comes across a few zoonyms in *A Smyrneika Lexicon*, such as “**bekátsa** = woodcock. From It. *beccaccia*. Same in Gr. Tur: çulluk” (12). The entry for *ghí(i)dharos* ‘donkey’ (also in standard Modern Greek, the word is *ghíidaros*) is apparently included for the same of an idiom: “you’ve eaten the donkey; all that’s left is the tail”, in the sense: “you might as well finish the work, most of it is done” (40).

VIII. On p. 24 in *A Smyrneika Lexicon*, one finds three entries relevant for zoology: “**devetzís** = camel owner, or camel train driver. From Tur[kish] *deve* = camel. Gr[EEK]: kamiliéris (see entry). Tur[kish]: deveci.” (Actually on p. 54 there is the entry “**kamíla** = camel. From anc. Gr. *kámelos*, originally from a Semitic language. Tur: deve. ● kamiliéris = camel train driver. Tur: deveci. Same in Gr. See also *devetzís*”); “**dhekahtoúra** = turtle dove,¹⁶ a characteristic bird of Smyrna, whose cooing sounds like the Gr. word *dekahtó* = eighteen. Same in Gr. Tur: kumru kuşu”; “**dhiános** = turkey. From Gr. *Indhianos* = American Indian, compare Fr. *dindon*. Gr: ghalopoúla. Tur: hindi”. Cf. Arabic *dīk al-Hind*, literally ‘cock of India’, Modern Hebrew *tarnegol-Hódu*, with the same literal sense ‘cock of India’ and the same denotation ‘turkey’. Arguably, the contrast of Smyrneika *dhiános* and standard Modern Greek *ghalopoúla* is somewhat like the contrast between those in Italy who call a turkey by the name *dindio* (from *pollo d’India*) and those who call it *gallinaccio* (or *gallaccio*), whereas the standard Italian name is *tacchino*.¹⁷

In the following, we consider another instance of a bird name in a language *L* being supposedly based on the call of that bird conventionally interpreted as an utterance in that same language *L*. In this other instance, this is conveyed in a funny story (also claimed to be an anecdote,

16 In ancient Greek, the names for ‘turtle dove’ (the genus *Streptopelia*) were *trygōn* and *hēdytera* (Arnott 2007, s.vv.).

17 Names for ‘turkey’ of the type of Italian *tacchino* are apparently because early descriptions by Spaniards in the New World often resorted to a reference system from either the Bible or the classics. The name ‘turkey’ was the name (*tukki*) which in Biblical Hebrew (in the plural *tukkiyyīm*, in *1 Kings* 10:22 and *2 Chronicles* 9:21) denotes exotic birds that were brought to King Solomon from Ophir, and which quite possibly were peacocks (on the Malabar coast of India, these are denoted by a similar term), whereas in Modern Hebrew *tukki* denotes ‘parrot’.

spuriously so) about misunderstanding of something that sounds like a dialectal Italian word (in Sicilian), *chiù*, for ‘more’.

Avvenimenti Faceti is preserved in MS XI. A. 20 of the Biblioteca Nazionale di Palermo, and is a collection of facetious local anecdotes written by an anonymous Sicilian author, probably a cleric, an itinerant preacher, in the first half of the 18th century. Giuseppe Pitrè edited and published (1885) the book in the original Italian with insertions in a dialect which he recognised as being from the province of Messina. In Section 59, “Barbaggianne [sic] in Trapani” (Pitrè 1885, pp. 85–86) — the owl species *Tyto alba* (known in English as the White Owl, the Barn Owl, or the Screech Owl) is known in Italian by the names *barbaggianni* (literally ‘Uncle John’) and *chiù* (after its call) — the following narrative is found:

Non saprei in quale chiesa in Trapani c’era abitazione di barbaggianni nel tetto; e come cotali animali dormono il giorno e vegliano la notte, faceano del rumore una notte. Uno nulla di ciò sapendo, trovandosi nella chiesa in tempo di notte, apprese che quel rumore fosse cagionato da qualche anima di qualche defonto [sic] seppellito [sic] in quella chiesa, che si faceva sentire, domandando in quella maniera suffragj; e benchè si fosse atterrito da quel strepito, nulla di meno fattosi animo interrogò il barbaggianne supposto: *Anima penante, cui siti?* E qui non rispondea il barbaggianne. *Ave bisogno di suffragj?* Ne tampoco a questa. *Quante messe volete celebrate, forse tre?* I barbaggianni sogliono mandare questa voce: *chivi chiù*; ed allora sciolse la voce [p. 86:] quella bestiola: *chiù*. Sentendo quello *chiù*, apprese che volesse più di tre messe, e rispose: «Cinque vi bastano?» Il barbaggianne proseguiva *chiù*. Dieci son buone? *Chiù*, si avanzò a maggior numero, e sempre udiva *chiù*, si diede in busca di messe raccontando il bisogno che aveva quel anima, e però dovea impegnarsi ogni fedele in libertà di quel penosissimo carcere; tanto girò sino che s’abbatte in uno che era consapevole dell’abitazione de barbaggianni, e gli disse: «O barbaggiannone, che ti sei lasciato uccellare de’ barbaggianni», e gli decifrò non esser stata quella voce di anima penante; mà di un barbaggianni par suo.

[At a church in Tràpani I am unable to identify, barn owls dwelt in the roof. As such animals sleep in daytime and are awake by night, one night they made noise. Somebody who knew nothing about that [i.e., about there being barn owls in the roof], finding himself at that church by night, thought that the noise was caused by the soul of somebody deceased and buried at that church, and that by making noise, it was asking for mass being said for that soul. He was terrified because of that clamour. He nevertheless found in himself courage enough to question what he thought that barn owl was: “O soul in torment, who are you?” The barn owl did not reply. “Do you need mass to be said for your soul?” There was no reply to this either. “How many masses you want to be said, perhaps three of them?” Barn owls have this call: *kivi kiyú*. That little animal finally called out: *Kiyú* [which in Sicilian is also the word for ‘more’]. Upon hearing that *kiyú*, the man thought that the soul in torment wanted more than three masses, so he replied: “Would five be enough?” The barn own repeated: *Kiyú*.

“Would ten do?” *Kiyú*. He named a larger number, but kept hearing *Kiyú*. He therefore set to procure masses, by relating the need that soul had for them. Each and every faithful would have to be involved in the attempt to secure the release of that soul from torment. He went around and eventually found somebody who was aware that there were barn owls, and that one told him: “You *barbagiannone* (‘big fool’, literally: ‘big barn owl’), you let yourself be b u g g e r e d (literally ‘birded’ [‘bird’ being intended as denoting ‘membrum virile’] in the sense ‘made o fool of’) by barn owls!”, and he went on to explain that it had not been the voice of a soul in torment, but that of a *barbagianni*, quite like himself.]

Some other times, a bird call is interpreted as being an utterance in some given human language, but without relating this to the name of the bird. Discussing Latin *cras* ‘tomorrow’, Leo Spitzer pointed out (Spitzer 1944, p. 156, fn. 3): “Spanish *cras* survives in the fourteenth-century *Libro de buen amor* thanks to a pun with the onomatopoeic *cras* (= the ‘cawing’ of the raven).” Perhaps the Latin word *cras* was used, rather than an obsolete Spanish word *cras*. It must be said however that already in late antiquity, the raven or the crow was to Christians a symbol for such persons who, lusting after this-worldly pleasures, keep putting off their conversion. Such procrastination was likened to the cawing of a raven or a crow, onomatopoeically rendered as *Cras, cras* (“Tomorrow, tomorrow”).

Among Baghdadi Jews there is the following interpretation of the cooing of a dove (*bəkhṭāyyī*), and this appears to be an adaptation to the Jewish dialect of lore from general society, because some of the words are in their Muslim Baghdadi Arabic rather than their Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic forms:

<i>Yā ʿəkhī,</i>	O sister of mine,
<i>Wēn ʿəntī?</i>	Where are you?
<i>Bəl Ḥəlla.</i>	In Hilla.
<i>Æš tākəl?</i>	What is she eating?
<i>Bājəlla.</i>	Broadbeans.
<i>Æš tāšyæb?</i>	What is she drinking?
<i>Māy ʿAlla.</i>	Water of G-d.

Ḥəlla is the Muslim Arabic name of the city, whereas in Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic, the place-name is *Ḥəlli* (even though *Ḥəlla* is also heard). The verbal form *tāšyæb* instead of *tāšræb* is Jewish. *Bājəlla* is the Muslim Iraqi Arabic collective name for ‘broadbeans’, whereas the Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic word is *bæqəlli*, from Latin *bacillum* ‘pod’: see in the previous entry in this article.

The rest of the present entry is taken from Nissan (2011). Different cultures and languages sometimes approximate the calls of given birds quite differently. Take the entry for *Koukouriakos* (i.e., the cock, usually *Alektōr*) in Geoffrey's Arnott's (2007) glossary of ancient to Byzantine Greek bird names: "According to Du Cange's glossary [of 1688], this was a Byzantine word for a male domestic Fowl (*Alektōr*, q.v.), presumably based on its 'Cock-a-doodle-doo' call" (Arnott 2007, p. 119). What children in Israel learn to refer to by *kukuriku*, English speakers know as *Cock-a-doodle-doo* indeed. Some practical guides for birdwatchers still approximate bird calls as words. Such is the case of the *Collins Field Guide [to] Birds of Britain & Europe* (Peterson et al. 1993, 5th edition). Rendition in words of bird-calls is subjective and language- and culture-bound; it is still found in some field guides, yet ornithological papers have turned to objective recordings as diagrams. Recorded vocalisations (songs or calls) of birds are analysed by ornithologists by means of *bioacoustic* techniques, which are not metaphorical other than in the sense that *sonagrams* (i.e., diagrams based on frequencies) are graphic metaphors that stand for sounds. There also exists an approach (not normally pursued by biologists) that adopts ethnomusicology as a metaphor; the ethnomusicologist and biologist "Peter Szöke [...] met with ornithomusicology. He began recording bird voices [...] as he had been used to collecting folk songs, comparing and analysing them. [...] [W]hat Szöke has found by slowing them down is that bird songs have the same musical structures as known in the music of man [i.e., in folk music or contemporary music]. The record's highlights, I would say, are the slowed down songs of Wood Lark and Hermit Trush, not only sung by the birds themselves but also by the Hungarian opera singer János Tóth without changing the original melodic shape of the bird song" (Auzinger 1988, p. 245, reviewing the review of a record, Szöke 1987, *The Unknown Music of Birds*).

The interpretation of bird calls has on occasion even resulted in a literary work, to which spiritual significance has been ascribed. The calls of various bird species were interpreted as Tibetan utterances, appear in a Tibetan sacred text of teaching ascribed to birds, *Bya chos rin-chen 'phreng-ba*, of which there exist translations into English, French, German, and two into Italian.¹⁸ For example, the Wagtail utters: "gTing-ring", i.e., "Very deep".

18 The English translation is by Edward Conze (1955). Eberhard Julius Dietrich Conze was later known as Edward Conze. His translation was based on Tibetan text edited by Satis Chandra Vidyabhushana, published in Calcutta in 1904, and on the French

The peacock utters: “Kog-go”, i.e., “One is deprived”. The red-beaked *jol-mo* (either *Leiotrix lutea*, or *Hypsipetes madagascariensis*, both of them from the Himalayas) utters “bCud long” (pronounce: “Čü lon”), i.e., “Seize the essence”. That book purportedly incorporates the teaching of Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva of Mercy, who had taken the form of a cuckoo and instructed the birds on the Himalayas in the Buddhist way of living and thinking.

British folklore goes further, and identifies with some utterance divided into separate words, preferably an English utterance, the calls of given bird kinds (we are not talking about Linnaean species, in folk-zoology). For example, Cocker and Mabey’s (2005) *Birds Britannica*, at the entry for the Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), states on p. 355 that this bird delivers its song “with a bold, loud, bell-like clarity” interpreted as happiness. “In the 1920s Lord Grey noted that one common phrase resembles the words ‘did-he-do-it’.” Cocker and Mabey further remarked (*ibid.*): “The resemblance to human phrases compounds the sense of a bird almost directly communicating with us.” The entry for the Cetti’s Warbler (*Cettia cetti*) in *Birds Britannica* claims on p. 362:

The first bird ever to be seen in Britain was thought to be saying, ‘is it safe? is it safe? see what you mean, see what you mean’, but the version that best expresses its personality was coined by George Yeates: ‘What-yer ... what-yer ... what-yer ... come-and-see-me-bet you-don’t ... bet you don’t’.¹⁹

This penchant for approximating bird calls as verbal utterances in English is sometimes also reflected in poetry. The entry for the Wood lark (*Lullula aroborea*) in *Birds Britannica* mentions on p. 308 that *The Woodlark*, a poem by Gerald Manley Hopkins, starts: “*Teevo cheevo cheevio chee: / O where, what can that be?*”, and ends: “*With a sweet joy of a sweet joy, / Sweet, of a sweet, of a sweet joy / Of a sweet — a sweet — sweet — joy.*” On p. 375, in the entry for the Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), *Birds Britannica* states that

translation by Henriette Meyer (1953). The German translation is by Otto von Taube (1957). Otto Adolf Alexander Freiherr (i.e., baron) von Taube (b. 1879 in Reval, i.e., Tallinn, in the Estonia, d. 1973 in Gauting, near Munich) was a German novelist, poet, and translator (of Calderon de la Barca, Francis of Assisi, William Blake, Stendhal, and Gabriele D’Annunzio), as well as a jurist, art historian, and biographer (of Rasputin, and eventually of himself). The two Italian editions are by Erberto Lo Bue (1998) and by Enrico Dell’Angelo (1989).

19 ‘Yer’ is dialectal English for ‘you’ or for ‘your’.

in John Clare's poem *The March Nightingale*, it is claimed that a listener cannot distinguish the nightingale's from the backcap's call, rendered as 'Sweet-jug-jug-jug'.

Ethel Rudkin (1938) contributed to the study of English folklore about demonic dog apparitions. In particular, she related: "In 1936, I was attending a course of lectures on Local History at Kirton Lindsey [in Lincolnshire, north of Lincoln]. One evening during the discussion after a lecture, the Black Dog was mentioned, because he has often been seen at Belle Hole, a farm about a mile west of the town." (*ibid.*, p. 114). Here is one of the episodes she was told by Mrs S. Moore, from Kirton (Rudkin 1938, pp. 116–117):

Some thirty years ago, the monthly nurse had been required at Belle Hole. Her time was up and she was returning to Kirton when she had put the other children to bed. As she was giving them their supper, they were talking of the Boggart [= the supernatural Black Dog] — "Aren't yer o' meetin' 'im, miss?" they asked and "wot'l yer do if yer *does* meet im?" and the nurse replied, "I shall put 'im I' my pocket." Later on she was returning to Kirton in the dark, when the Dog appeared and ran round her saying, "Put me in yer pocket, put me in yer pocket." This is the only record of the Dog speaking, and the explanation had probably to do with the railway and the direction of the wind, for if the wind were blowing from the north or the north-west, the wheels on the line possibly accounted for the "put-me-in-yer-pocket, put-me-in-yer-pocket."

It is onomatopoeia, and many alternatives are possible. Trying to rationalize, Rudkin felt able to explain why on the given occasion the babysitter ("monthly nurse") had heard the dog utter repeatedly the given challenge. This is because its stress prosody onomatopoeically matched the sound made by trains. It is a fairly loose constraint, relatively easy to satisfy: it accepts a multitude of alternatives, provided that the sequence of stressed and unstressed syllables is the pattern required. Obviously, there are many more onomatopoeic alternatives to the sound of trains than, say, in the phonetic matching of Japanese *Do-itashi-mashite* ('you're welcome', responding to 'thank you!', as was remarked to me by Ghil'ad Zuckermann) as English *Don't touch a moustache*.

In the international folklore standard classification of motifs, the motif of bird language is B215.1. Cf. motifs B216 (Knowledge of animal language), J1811.0.1 (Owl's hoot interpreted), K1969.5.1 (Person pretends to know the language of animals: birds, insects, etc.), and J816.1 (King brought to sense of duty by feigned conversation of birds), the latter being the central motif of tale type 908A (the King asks "What is the owl

saying?”, and a wise minister interprets it so as to show the King the ruinous effects of his policies). There is such a tale in *The Thousand and One Nights*. See Thompson (1955–1958), El-Shamy (2004, 2006).

2.3 Vernacular Architecture

IX. I have had the opportunity to research Ottoman vernacular architecture, especially from Baghdad (Nissan 2009 [2010], 2016), so I would like to signal a few entries about vernacular architecture from *A Smyrneika Lexicon*:

kafəsi / kafási = cage, prison cell. From Tur. kafes = cage, mesh cage. Gr. klouví,²⁰ kelí.²¹ Mostly used for the Ottoman latticed screens on the windows of Turkish houses, especially on the upper floor balcony, from where women could watch the street without being seen by (male) passers-by. Gr: kafási. Tur: kafes balkon. (51–52)

klistó balkóni = enclosed or encased balcony. From the Gr. This is a bay window balcony typical of Levantine, Greek and Maltese²² houses. The Turkish word *cumba* (see *tzoúmba*) refers to this style of balcony, as well as to Turkish-style lattice-screened ones (see *kafəsi*). Tur: cumbali balkon. (62)

tzoúmba = protrusion (lit.). Used to describe any type of encased balcony of Smyrna (e.g. a bay-window). From Tur. *cumba*,²³ orig. from It. *gibbo* = a hump, a protuberance, something that sticks out from its surroundings. Gr: sahnisi. See also *klistó balkóni & sahnisini*. (139)

sahnisini / sahnisídi = Turkish-style enclosed balcony. From Tur. *şahnışin* = bay window, alcove. Gr: sahnisi. Tur: şahnışin, cumba. See *kafəsi & klistó balkóni*. (113)

20 The ancient Greek noun is κλωβός. Cf. in post-Biblical and Modern Hebrew *kluv / klub/*, ‘cage’ (spelled *klwb*). In the *Babylonian Talmud*, tractate *Betsa* 24a, “These enter their coop (*kělūvān*) [for roosting] in the evening”. The Hebrew noun is already found in the Bible: in *Amos* 8:1–2 it denotes a basket containing summertime fruits (on the evidence of a genitival compound *kělūb-qāyis*), whereas in *Jeremiah* 5:27 we are told: “like a cage (*kělūb*) full of fowl”.

21 Cf. in Biblical and later Hebrew *kéle* ‘prison’, probably unrelated etymologically. The Hebrew word has cognates within the Semitic language family.

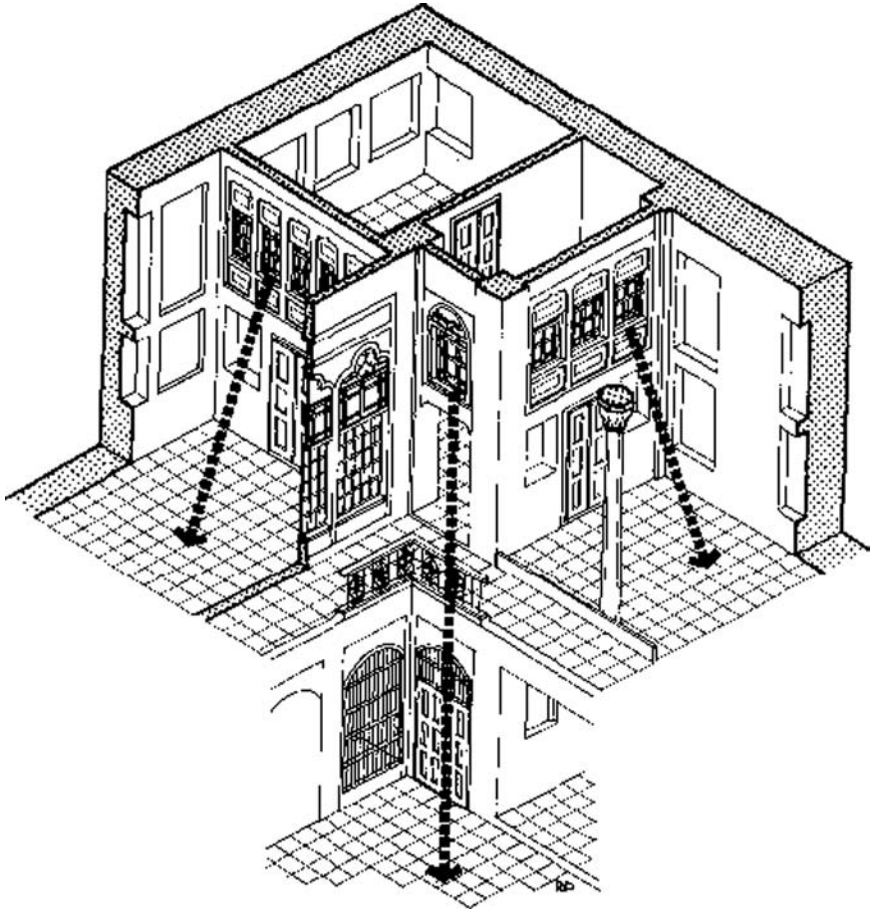
22 The Maltese quarter in Smyrna is the *Maltízika* (81). “The flourishing of Smyrna’s economy in the 18th century encouraged many Maltese islanders to settle in the city” (81, s.v. *Maltézos*). On p. 81 in *A Smyrneika Lexicon*, there is an entry for *maltezópetra* for “Malta sandstone, used in house building”. A sub-entry states: “maltezóplakes = flagstones (pl.) made of *maltezópetra*, used for pavements”, with an explanation that “British ships, always stopping in Malta on their way to Smyrna, were often empty on the last leg of their journey and needed ballast”.

23 In the spelling of Republican Turkish, *c* stands for the *j* of English *John*.



Fig. 84. Haus von antikem Ziegelmaterial; Erkervorbau; Blindfenster-, Fenster- und Türumrahmungen, Sinsglieder und Dachbalustrade mit Gips verputzt.

An enclosed balcony (*šenašil*) above the main entrance door of a traditional Iraqi house. From a dissertation by Felix Langenegger (1911), where it is called a “Fenstersitz (Schenaschil)”.



Lattice-screened windows in a mezzanine (*kabiškān*) in an Iraqi traditional house with an internal court. From Langenegger's dissertation (1911).



Shanashil (bay windows) of old houses in Bara, Iraq.



An enclosed balcony, actually a room, from Sir Francis Younghusband's book about Kashmir (1909, repr. 1911). Colour painting by E. Molyneux.

2.4 Other

X. On p. 9 in *A Smyrneika Lexicon*, one finds: “**bagatéla** = something trifling, a bagatelle. From It. *bagattella* / Fr. *bagatelle*. Gr: *bagatéla*, *bahatéla*. Tur: *önemsiz şey*” (literally, the Turkish means ‘something, *şey* [an Arabism] without [the suffix *-siz*] importance, *önem*’). Alinei (1967) derives Italian *bagattella* from Medieval Latin (found in the records of 12th-century Genoan notaries) *bagadellus* (adj., ‘Baghdadi’), *bagadellum* (noun, ‘an object from Baghdad’), which occur in an array of variants one century later throughout northern Italy, in Tuscany, and in Barcelona. Alinei maintained that the Italian plural *bagatelle* originally denoted cheap products bought by Italian merchants in Baghdad, and resold in Italy and elsewhere. Alinei found support for that hypothesis in the contexts of early occurrence, of the type “a *bagattella* of ... Liras”. Alinei pointed out that in medieval Catalan Latin documents, *bagadel* sometimes denotes ‘indigo’, some other times kinds of cloth. In Italy, *gallina bagadese* denotes a particular local race of chicken, and the adjective *bagadese* (now only used in that compound) is derived from the Pisan and Genoan form of the name for Baghdad.²⁴ On p. 9 in *A Smyrneika Lexicon*, one also finds: “**baghdatí** = a kind of wattle and daub internal wall. From Tur. *bağdadi*, derived from the city of Baghdad in Iraq. Same in Gr. But seldom used.”

XI. Concerning “**kromída** = a large onion, but also ironically a pocket watch” (72), cf. Italian *cipollone* ‘pocket watch’, derived from *cipolla* ‘onion’. Elsewhere (Nissan, in press) I have discussed pocket watches produced in Switzerland for the Ottoman market, as well as clocks, with four hands: one pair of hands showed Western time with fixed-length hours all year long, whether the other pair of hands was adjusted by devout owners, Jewish or Muslim, once a week (checking the clock of a clock tower, e.g. in Baghdad),²⁵ so it would reflect the seasonally varying length of hours in daytime. Moreover, *A Myrneika Lexicon* states, s.v. *kromída*: “Another use

24 Also note: (a) Italian *baldacchino* ‘canopy’, English *baldachin*, from the medieval Tuscan name for Baghdad, which was *Baldacco* or *Baldacca*; (b) English *muslin* from French *mousseline*, from Italian *mussolina*, and this from the other cloth-name *mússola*, pattern after the city of Mossul in northern Iraq.

25 In *A Smyrneika Lexicon*, there is a photograph of the Clock Tower and Imperial barracks on p. 150.

of the word was for ties with very large knots, making them look like large onion” (72).

XII. We are told about a humorous *blason populaire*: “**agharinós** = stranger, ironically used by Smyrniot Greeks to refer to Athenians. From *Hagar*, wife of Abraham and mother of Ishmael. Gr: ksénos, while *Agharinós* = Arab, hence the irony” (2). Sometimes an ethnic name in normal use in Smirneika was different from the one in use in standard Modern Greek. Whereas in the latter, a Belgian is a *Vélghos*, in Smyrneika it was a *Beltzikános*: “Belgian (person). There was a smkall but industrially important Belgian colony in Smyrna” (13). As for the Dutch, “by the end of the 19th century they were operating a Dutch hospital (built in 1675) and also had a chapel in Smyrna [...] The year 2012 marks the 400th anniversary of the Dutch presence in Izmir” (92).

XIII. An entry, *dhrimáta*, on pp. 24–25 in *A Smyrneika Lexicon*, names a cultural practice explained as follows: “the first 6 days of August, when one should avoid any contact with water. Children were especially warned against swimming, and if they nonetheless did go for a swim, a piece of wood or a nail was sown to the swimsuit, to counteract the threat of that particular inauspicious day. The custom was also practiced in Chios.” There is no etymological remark. An explanation in Turkish does appear. Whereas the entry is of clear interest for folklore studies,²⁶ in respect of linguistics

26 Another entry about a superstition is “**douzdabánis** = flat foot. Used to describe someone bringing bad luck. From Tur. *düztaban*. Gr: platípodhas & ghrousoúzis. Tur: *düztaban*; *uğursuz*” (26). Turkish *düztaban* is from the Turkish adjective *düz* ‘flat’ or ‘smooth’; and the Turkish noun *taban* ‘sole of the foot’. Turkish *uğur* denotes both ‘good luck’ and ‘good wish’. The verb *ugur getirmek* denotes ‘to bring good luck’. Turkish *uğursuz* literally means ‘luck-less’. But presumably “someone bringing bad luck” is rather a jynx? Cf. in Smyrneika: “**ghoúri** = good luck. From Tur. *uğur* = fortune, luck. Gr: kalí tíhi, ghoúri” (42); “**ghrousoúziá / ghoursouziá** = bad luck, bad karma. From Tur. *uğursuzluk*. ● **ghrousoúzis** = bringer of bad luck. Same in Gr. Tur: *uğursuzluk getiren şey*” (42). The Turkish verb *getirmek* denotes ‘to bring’. There is an entry for a particular kind of magic spell: “**ghlikádhi** = vinegar, lit.: ‘sweetmeat’, a spell to prevent wine spoiling” (42). A *kafetzouí* is “a female fortune-teller who reads the dregs of Turkish coffee” (52). A *moustouloutzís* is “a type of large moth identified as the Vine Hawk-Moth (*Hippotion celerio*), which was believed to indicate the imminent arrival of a visitor” (89); an etymological conjecture and an explanation in Turkish follow in the same entry. A formula to avert the evil eye from one’s interlocutor is the third entry of the letter N, on p. 90. Such a formula is a psycho-ostensive

I have nothing to say concerning the actual etymology, and yet, I find the term striking owing to its potential for recreational linguistics. I have no knowledge of how, if at all, Jews in Smyrna referred to the custom over the centuries. Hebrew culture however, because of Talmudic and other texts being in an alternation of Hebrew and Middle Aramaic, is used to reach out to Aramaic, apart from Hebrew as being the language of culture. Besides, Aramaic written *d* has a known phonological correspondence to the Hebrew phoneme /z/. The Hebrew *zérem* ‘stream’, ‘current’, /zrima/ ‘flowing’, and the verb *zārám* ‘to flow’, are apt for the situation described, because of the danger to swimmers from currents. I by no means suggest that there is any etymological relation to Smyrneika *dhrimáta*, but I would like to point out the potential for wordplay,²⁷ and for a playful interpretation as a pseudo-Aramaic (actually a Hebrew lexical root in an Aramaic word-form) /zrimata/. (In Targumic Aramaic, one finds the spelling *zrmyt*, for *zarmīth* or *zērāmīth*,²⁸ in the sense ‘shower’ ‘storm’, in the *Targum* to *Isaiah* 4:6 and 28:2.) By the same token, there is potential for Hebraising pseudo-Aramaic wordplay in Sicilian (and now international) *omertà*, by playfully interpreting it as *omerta*, from the Hebrew participle *omér* ‘saying, who says’ (*omertà* is about refraining from telling), and the Aramaic suffix *-ta* (which is a semantic equivalent of the Latin suffix *-itas*, or English *-ity*).

XIV. Concerning the entry for *bourekákia*, on p. 17 — “*filo* pastry stuffed with cheese and folded into triangular morsels (pl.). From Tur. *börek*, orig. from Pers. *burak* = triangular pastry. Same in Gr. Tur: muska böreği” (cf. on p. 40, s.v. *ghalatoboúreko*) — also note that in Aegean Judaeo-Spanish (in Smyrna there was an important Jewish community, whose language it was), the name is *burékas*. That is also the name now in use in Israeli Hebrew, for the same denotatum. There is an entry for *Ladino* (i.e., Judaeo-Spanish) on p. 75, and an entry for *Ovréos / Evréos* ‘Jew’ on p. 93.

One does find other Jewish references as well. Take the entry for *drahomá* for “Jewish dowry” (27), which includes an etymological conjecture.

malo-fugitive (cf. Tannen and Öztekin 1981, Matisoff 2000, Lawry 2012, Allami and Nekouzadeh 2011).

27 An example of wordplay is found on p. 81, s.v. *mamaloukos* “= a child (sometimes even an adult) who is attached to his/her mother’s apron strings, ‘namby-pamby’. From Gr. *mamá* = mummy, ending influenced by Tur. *mamluk*” for a Mameluk (and this from Arabic *mamlūk* ‘owned’). It is an instance of portmanteau formation.

28 Jastrow (1903, p. 414, s.v.).

The definition is somewhat ambiguous. For several centuries now, in Jewish societies, it often was the bride who had to bring a dowry, instead of the bridegroom having to pay²⁹ her family, even though formally there is a transfer of something valuable to bring a betrothal into effect, this necessity became a preoccupation for her family. Moreover, the bridegroom must allocate a sum (in the *ketubbah*) that his widow, or his divorcee it blameless, would be entitled to, and in wealthier families, that could be quite a substantial sum.

Another entry is “*hávra* = synagogue. From Tur. *havra*, orig. from Hebrew *hebrah* = congregation, assembly.³⁰ Tur: *sinagog*, *havra*. Gr: *sinagoghí*, while *hávra* = a gathering where everybody is speaking at the same time. ● *Hávra sokáki* = the main street of the Jewish quarter, which still exists in Izmir today” (47). Concerning the Jewish community of Izmir in the 17th and 18th centuries, see a Hebrew book by Grunhaus (1997), whose focus is on internal direct taxation (this was used in order to pay the collective tax imposed on the community by the Ottoman authorities). I reviewed it in Nissan (1999). In her book, Grunhaus’s main source was the book *Avodat Massá* (literally, ‘work of load’, but there is a pun of *massá*

29 The usual Hebrew term for ‘dowry’ is *ndunya*, whereas the Biblical term for ‘wife-price’ is *móhar*, which in later practice was applied to the *ketubbah* money, i.e., the money agreed upon in the marriage contract as being the wife’s settlement if widowed or divorced other than for her fault. Nevertheless, as pious companies arose in Jewish communities from the Middle Ages on, for various purposes, the name for the charitable company for providing poor marriageable women with a dowry came to be called “the *móhar* of the maidens”, which at any rate is the name still formally applied within some Jewish communities in Italy: *móar abbedulód* in the old pronunciation of Hebrew in Italy; normally *móhar habbetulót*. The latter phrase is found in the Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Ketubbót*, 10a, in a context referring to *Exodus* 22:16 and *Deuteronomy* 22:29 (about a different kind of indemnity).

Jackson (2003, p. 200) maintains: “My argument, in broad terms, is that the *mohar* and dowry came to be treated as a single pot from an early stage in Jewish practice, and that we should not seek to dichotomise the sources into a Jewish *mohar/ketubbah*-based marriage on the one hand and an ‘assimilated’ dowry-based marriage on the other”. Jackson (2003, pp. 199–200) remarks that Bickerman made much of the fact “that the Septuagint translates the biblical *mohar* by *pherne* (dowry)” (see Bickerman 1956, p. 84). Again Jackson (2003, p. 200) points out that “Satlow argues that the earliest clear references to the rabbinic *ketubah* payment (i.e. the deferred *mohar* coming from the husband) are late tannaitic” (i.e., from the second centuries C.E.), citing Satlow (1993, p. 142 ff).

30 Hebrew /*hebra*/, pronounced *hevrá* or *khevrá*. In *A Smyrneika Lexicon*, *h* stands for *kh*.

‘load’ and *mas* ‘tax’), a book in a mix of Hebrew and Judaeo-Spanish, authored by Rabbi Yehoshua Avraham Yehuda — who for several decades, had been the secretary of the Jewish community of Izmir — and printed in Salonika in 1846. The taxation norms as stated in *Avodat Massá* are authenticated by what is found in rabbinic response as early as the 17th century. The flourishing of Smyrna in the 17th century attracted Jewish immigrants from Salonika, Chios, Constantinople, Tyre, Manisa, and perhaps also Safed in the Galilee. There were Greek-speaking Jews in Smyrna at least as early as the early Roman Empire, but the community was linguistically Hispanicised by the influx of refugees after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. Some of the Jews were of Portuguese origin however, and there also European, non-Ottoman Jews known as *Franco*s. An appendix to Grunhaus (1997) is a prosopography of 3 rabbis of Smyrna (pp. 149–155). For example, Rabbi Yitzchak Hacoheh Rapaport, who arrived in Anatolia as a fund-raising emissary from Safed in 1714, was the first Ashkenazi Jew who became chief rabbi in Smyrna; then from 1750 to his death in 1755 he was the Rishon leZion (First of Zion), the chief rabbi of Jerusalem, a post traditionally filled by Sephardis. The most famous Smyrna rabbi was Ḥayyim Palaci (1788–1868).

XV. Sometimes a brand name is behind an entry: “**gómmina** = hair cream for men, a kind of brilliantine. From the brand name «Gommina Argentina», a hair cream made of gum by «Societa [*recte*: Società] Anonima Vermondo Valli»³¹ of Milan. Tur: saç kremi” (43). In Italian, the word for ‘brilliantine’ is *brillantina*. The tonic stress on the Italian diminutive word *gommina* is on the penultimate syllable, thus unlike in Smyrneika (which retained the tonic stress as in the etymon, Italian *gomma*).

2.5 Corrections

XVI. In the entry for *boughátsa*, on p. 17 — “cheese-filled puff pastry cooked in a large tray. From Tur. *poğaç*a, orig. from It. *focaccia*. Same in Gr.” — read *focaccia* for the wrong *foccacia*.

31 Wasn't it supposed to be an anonymous society?...

XVII. There is a hypercorrection (“Mama, gli Turchi” with *gli*) instead of the proper Italian idiom “Mamma, li Turchi!”, on p. 56, in this entry: “**Karamousála** = bogeyman, a character used to scare children.³² *Karamusala* in Turkish is a shipping term to do with anchors. The term probably dates back to spice ships, later turned into pirate ships raiding the coasts. Hence «Karamousála is coming!» In Italy, a similar expression, «Mama, gli Turchi!» (= “Mum, the Turks!”) is still used. Gr: babouías. Tur: çocuklan ürküten efsanevi dev, öcü.” There is an entry for “**Babouías** = mythical character to scare children” on p. 9.

XVIII. On p. 62, in the entry for *kitápi* (“book, mainly referring to an official record, otherwise Gr. *vivlío* was more common”), a loanword from Turkish, “orig. from Arab. *qítāb* = (holy) book”, replace *qítāb* with *kitāb*.

3. Envoi

Its position in the Mediterranean, as well as the history of the region and of commerce in the Mediterranean, made Smyrna a very interesting place for language contact. This shaped the lexicon of Smyrniot Greek (Smyrneika). *A Smyrneika Lexicon* provides a fascinating account, entry after entry, of the lexical peculiarities of this vernacular of a world that is no more. The original part of this review article is a sequence of lexical remarks, prompted by individual entries in *A Smyrneika Lexicon*, and spanning several languages.

32 Also the following entry (from p. 72) is about dealing with children: **kratítira** = an imaginary kitchen utensil. From Gr. *krató* = to keep. When a mother wanted her child to be kept by a relative for a while, she used to send the child to the grandmother, for instance, and told the child to say to the grandmother: “Mummy is asking if we can borrow your *kratítira*”. And the grandmother would reply: “Wait here for a while, because the *kratítira* is with a neighbour, I’ll give it to you when the neighbour returns it. The child, of course, would think that it was some kind of kitchen utensil, and waited there. This is an important, pure Smyrneika word. [An explanation in Turkish follows.]

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