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The semantic structure of adjectives referring to the holiness in Maltese and Arabic languages.

After in 1931 Jost Trier proposed his theory of lexical fields, the lexicon started to gain more interest of scholars representing the structural approach to linguistics. Searching for semantic structure of language resulted in many publications concerning different frames of meaning as well as various relations linking the lexemes one to another. The present paper is an analysis of the Maltese and Arabic adjectives related to the notion of holiness. Chronologically, the adjectives were selected from Christian (mainly Catholic) texts written from the 16th to 18th centuries (in the case of Arabic) or composed in the 18th and 19th centuries (in the case of Maltese). The research was conducted through the componential analysis of meaning used in terms of the contrastive description. The Maltese material of our study comprises two adjectives derived from the root QDS (*mqaddes*; *qaddis*) and a bunch of others being of Romance origin (*santu*; *sagru*; *sagrosant*; *santifikat*; *konsagrat*). As far as Arabic adjectives are concerned they are represented by the following group of lexemes: *qiddīs*; *muqaddas*; *quddūs*; *waliyy*; *ṭāhir*; *barī*?

The study showed:

- the extension of meaning of the Maltese adjective *mqaddes* (in comparison to its derivational/etymological counterpart in Arabic *muqaddas*) what resulted in changes within the lexical field of “holiness”, which in the Maltese language reflects rather the opposition of the adjectives *santo* and *sagro* in Italian.
- the semantic differentiation of the Arabic adjectives with the semantic marker +human (*qiddīs*; *waliyy*; *ṭāhir*; *barī*?)
- the general lack of semantic parallelism between Maltese and Arabic adjectives bearing the notion of “holiness”.