

the patentees of the Holy Office through a papal bull. The patentees of the Holy Office were exempt through a declaration of the Supreme Congregation.<sup>75</sup> For instance, in 1664, a certain Matthew Habdilla was declared exempt from paying that tax because he was a patentee of the Holy Office.<sup>76</sup>

10. The Exemption from paying a tax for the fortification of Malta

In Malta, this exemption too applied to all the Knights, the patentees of the Order of St. John, and to the Artillery Commander.<sup>77</sup>

11. The Privilege not to be obliged to buy corn, rice, and barley, which were sometimes distributed to the population

This privilege was also granted to all the Knights of St. John. It was then guaranteed to the patentees of the Holy Office as well, through a decree of the Supreme Congregation.<sup>78</sup>

These numerous privileges excited the hatred of the Grand Master against the patentees of the Holy Office. In fact the Knights used all their efforts to convince these patentees to give up their patents. They endeavoured to convince others not to accept to be among the Inquisitor's patentees. But it was to no avail. As a result of this struggle, the Holy Office patentees were deprived of many rights and offices in Malta. For instance, they were not admitted to bear witness in favour of anyone in court.<sup>79</sup>

Hostile and bitter words were often uttered against all privileges of these patentees. As time passed, their privileges were confined within certain limits. In fact, according to Inquisitor Maescotti, nothing was left of their former rights. In 1666 their exemption from civil authority was reduced to a meaningless word.<sup>80</sup>

While considering the above mentioned privileges, we notice that the patentees were endowed with the same privileges of the Knights of St. John. Notwithstanding this, while the Knights with all their might and ability were always on the alert to safeguard all their privileges, they themselves could not tolerate the privileges of the Inquisitor's patentees. According to the Inquisitors, the Knights aimed continuously to undermine, weaken, and eventually annihilate the privileges of anyone else on the Island.

75. ASV, S.S. Malta, 186, f.122r.

76. *Ibid.*

77. *Ibid.*

78. *Ibid.*, f.122r-v.

79. Bibl. Vat., *Ottob. Lat.*, 2206, p.II, f.342v.

80. *Ibid.*, ff.342v-343r.

REV. DR. ALEXANDER BONNICI O.F.M. Conv., H.E.D. (Rome), S.Th.L. (Rome), Ph.B. (Rome), is Lecturer in Church History and Patrology at INSERM and author of several studies on the Inquisition.

## REBEL IN THE MIND: THE POETRY OF MARIO AZZOPARDI

Grazio Falzon

*qu'il ramasse, recolle  
et veut confondre.*

Alain Bosquet

Mario Azzopardi is the *enfant terrible* of contemporary Maltese poetry. A maelstrom of debate surrounds his imaginative and iconoclastic verses. He is fearless in his attempts to mock tradition or push it to the limits of this passion for life and passion for words. His poetry is verbal pyrotechnics sprawling in a phantasmagoria of images of a tortured mind.

In the mid-sixties, the Island of Malta severed ties with the British Crown and achieved independence after 160 years of colonial rule. Political freedom coincided with a period of internal social upheaval; new socio-economic forces traumatized the new-born nation.

Azzopardi was among the most outspoken activists; he was at the time committed to social and cultural change free from rigid traditional systems. He protested vehemently against an alienated silent majority that had been manipulated far too long by opportunistic political regimes and a church he considered backward and hypocritical. He jolted and shocked Maltese consciousness by his manifestos satirizing popular customs and beliefs.

A non-conformist, Azzopardi was at the vanguard of a crusade for innovative literary forms that were free from the archaic influences of the Italian *Risorgimento*. He was largely instrumental in bringing about the most radical changes in poetic thinking and composition in modern Maltese literature.

Azzopardi's poetic success, though largely the result of a unique talent, reflects cross-cultural forces and influences. He was exposed and sensitized to contemporary overseas literary trends. He felt a special affinity with American poets; he consciously aligned himself with the American ideogrammic stream of poetry, instigated primarily by the Projectivist and Beat poets. He considered the American influence vital for his own experimental mode in poetry.

The Beats erupted into the American literary scene in the late