

# A BAD REPUTATION FOR THE MALTESE INQUISITION UNDER MGR JOHN BAPTIST GORI PANNELLINI (1639-1646)

by

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## *A contradictory portrait of an Inquisitor*

The personality of John Baptist Gori Pannellini (1), Inquisitor of Malta between the years 1639 and 1646, in the light of his own dispatches, lies in contradiction with what others thought about him. On account of Gori, the Knights of Malta, the Bishop, and the Maltese engendered or increased their hatred against the Tribunal of the Holy Inquisition.

In his dispatches to Rome, Gori appears to be a victim of injustice, a target of persecution, and one with a heart of extreme sensibility to suffering and of promptness to pardon. On the contrary, in the dispatches

1. For a brief reference to this Inquisitor, see Alex. Bonnici, O.F.M. Conv., "Superstitions in Malta towards the middle of the seventeenth century in the light of the Inquisition trials", *M[elita] H[istorica]*, vol. IV, n. 3 (1966), p. 169.  
For the *main sources* about this Inquisitor, see:
  - a. A(rchivum) S(ecretum) V(aticanum), S(ecretaria) S(tatus), Malta, 7, *Lettere originali degli Inquisitori Giovanbattista Gori Pannellini, Antonio Pignatelli, e Carlo Cavalletti alla Segreteria, dal 9 maggio 1645 all'8 dicembre 1651* (275 ff.) [For a partial publication from this manuscript, see: P. Piccolomini, "Corrispondenza tra la Corte di Roma e l'Inquisitore di Malta durante la guerra di Candia (1645-1669), *A(rchivio) S(torico) I(taliano)*, s.V, 41 (1908), pp. 46-127 passim].
  - b. Bibl(ioteca) Vat(icana), Barb(erini) Lat(ino), 6683, *Lettere in piano e in cifra dell'Inquisitore di Malta Mons. Giovanbattista Gori Pannellini al Cardinale Francesco Barberini con varie proposte e risposte al medesimo Cardinale, dal 5 marzo al 26 dicembre 1639*, 71f.
  - c. Bibl. Vat., Barb. Lat., 6684, *Lettere in piano e in cifra dell'Inquisitore Gori al Card. F. Barberini, dal 4 gennaio al 31 dicembre 1640*, 136f.
  - d. Bibl. Vat., Barb. Lat., 6685, *Lettere in piano e in cifra, e queste non decifrate dell'Inquisitore Gori al Card. F. Barberini dal 1 gennaio 1641 al 6 dicembre 1642*, 41f.
  - e. Bibl. Vat., Barb. Lat., 6686, *Manoscritti di lettere di alcuni Inquisitori di Malta, fra le quali (ff. 1-86): Lettere dell'Inquisitore Gori al Cardinale F. Barberini, dal 15 gennaio 1643 al 4 dicembre 1645*.  
[For a *repertory* about these manuscripts, see: Aless. Bonnici, O.F.M. Conv., "Due Secoli di storia politico-religiosa di Malta nel Fondo Barberini Latino della Biblioteca Vaticana", *M.H.*, v. 4, n. 4 (1967), p. 245].
  - f. A(rchives of the) I(nquisition of) M(alta), *Lettere della Suprema Congregazione all'Inquisitore di Malta, 7* (1637-1641), 239f.
  - g. A.I.M., *Lettere della Suprema Congregazione*, 8 (1642-1648), 279f.
  - h. A.I.M., *Processi del Tribunale dell'Inquisizione nel periodo di Gori Pannellini*, 54-60.

of the Supreme Tribunal of the Holy Office, he appears as a person without the necessary ability for his office, with an exaggerated confidence in his ministers, and as one who gave occasion to a very bad reputation of the Tribunal itself. In the mind of the Maltese, he appears as a tyrannical executor of justice, or even worse, as a person who threw others into prison out of vain pretexts and fantastical illusions.

At the end of his term of office in Malta, Gori declared that he had adhered to his duties with the highest fidelity (2). He repeatedly confessed that he was ready to make any sacrifice for the sake of justice (3). Besides, he sincerely tried to give evidence of his kindness and tenderness. He often pleaded on behalf of the Maltese so that the Holy See might not give to foreigners the benefices of the Island (4). No occasion escaped him whenever he had the possibility to favour the Jesuits who, quite recently, had suffered a short but ignominious expulsion from Malta (5). When an Archbishop had been captured by French Corsairs and stripped of all his possessions, Gori insisted for and finally obtained his freedom; moreover, the Inquisitor offered him clothes, linens, provisions, money, and anything he needed (6).

#### *A failure in diplomacy*

Nevertheless, was Gori liked by the Maltese Authorities? Probably, they noticed his weakness. In front of the Bishop, he was afraid to defend his rights. On the contrary, in a manner with which he expressed a sense of inferiority complex, he accused himself for lack of diplomacy. Besides, considering that the Bishop of Malta was *Mgr Michael John Balaguer De Camarasa* (1635-1663) (7), the Inquisitor could not obtain but a negative

2. "Sei in sett'anni qui in Malta Inquisitore e Delegato Apostolico con ogni debita fedeltà": A.S.V., S.S. *Malta*, 7, f.26r.
3. "Se per mantener il rispetto et autorità dell'offitio mio potevo far di meno di quel che ho fatto per amministrar la giustitia come sono obligato, et haverei pagato assai del mio . . .": Bibl. Vat., *Barb. Lat.*, 6684, f. 123v.
4. ". . . pigliando maggior animo di supplicarla di questa gratia nel sentire che li maltesi habbino privilegio che li benefitti della loro isola non si conferiscano a forestieri": *Ib.*, f. 33r.
5. "Non ho lassato per il passato occasion'alcuna che mi sia presentata di servir li Padri Giesuiti": *Ib.*, f. 50r.
6. The Archbishop mentioned here is Mgr Merullo of Manfredonia: "è stato fatto prigionero per condurlo in Francia . . . Et essendoci andato ancora io per far la medesima istanza . . . et anco sono andato per visitare il detto Monsignor Arcivescovo e consolarlo, havengoli (!) offerto biancaria, panni, provisioni, denari, e qualsivoglia cosa che volesse": *Ib.*, 6686, f. 72A r-v.
7. For reference to this Bishop see:  
A. Zammit Gabarretta, *The presentation, examination, and nomination of the Bishops of Malta in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (Malta 1961).  
Aless. Bonnici, O.F.M. Conv., "I Vescovi di Malta Baldassarre Cagliares (1615-1633) e Michele Balaguer (1635-1663)", *M.H.*, v. 5, n. 2 (1969), pp. 114-157.

effect; the Pastor of the Island took advantage of the Inquisitor's weakness. Gori was not stern enough, and consequently, Balaguer despised him for being a coward and frequently, while conversing with the Grand Master, referred to the Inquisitor with a sense of contempt. Then, on the other hand, speaking to the Inquisitor, the Bishop said anything that came to his mind against the Knights (8). The Bishop charged him also of coldness and indifference in dealing with the diocesan affairs in front of the Grand Master (9).

Notwithstanding this, Balaguer was disgusted with Gori. Seven Inquisitors, from Fabio Chigi up to Galeazzo Marescotti, presided over the Maltese Tribunal of the Holy Office during the episcopate of Balaguer. But, if we give credit to the Bishop's words, no Inquisitor had ever vexed the diocesan pastor more than Gori. According to the Bishop, the Inquisitor humbled him just to please the Knights of St. John. Other Inquisitors used to help the Bishop; but Gori did not ever give him a hand to relieve him from his troubles (10).

To our astonishment, the same Balaguer, who so often disdained Gori, had only words of praise for the Inquisitor on his departure from Malta (11).

The sad Inquisitorship of Gori does not result by any means better if we give a look to his relations with the Knights. He did his best to defend the Knights and to have their privileges confirmed; but, notwithstanding this, not only the Knights but also the Grand Master himself had no esteem for the Inquisitor and would have liked to get rid of him. *Grand Master Lascaris* (1636 - 1657) complained that the Inquisitor had accused him of injustices. Gori was also incriminated that he was favouring the enemies of the Grand Master; but, diversely from the Bishop, the Grand Master was not so impudent so as to face the Inquisitor with those denunciations (12). Furthermore, according to the Inquisitor, the

8. "Lo pregai a scusarmi . . . Mi dispiaceva del cattivo concetto che ha di me . . . Li replicai che credevo d'haver il torto, come esso diceva, e che però mi scusasse, e che mi dicesse come voleva che lo servissi, che l'havrei fatto volentieri": *Bibl. Vat., Barb. Lat.*, 6684, f. 105v.

9. "Sento che Monsignor Vescovo, con il suo Agente, si lamenti che nelli negotii suoi col Signor Gran Mastro io non tratti con fervore": *Ib.*, f. 79r-v.

10. A. Bonnici, "I Vescovi di Malta Cagliares e Balaguer", *M.H.*, v. 5, p. 40.

11. "Lasciando a questa Sagra Religione e popolo straordinario dispiacere, essendo ne cuori a tutti insinuato si prudente e zelante nell'amministrazione": *A.S.V., [Lettere di] Vescovi [e Prelati]*, 26, I, f. 305r.

12. "Ho inteso che si sia lamentato che io habbi detto che egli habbia fatta un'ingiustitia e che io habbi li medesimi concetti de suoi avversarii in questo negotio; con me però non ha mostrato Sua Eminenza minimo segno di poco gusto, ma lodato sempre, e prima e dopo, li buoni offitii che passo seco": *Bibl. Vat., Barb. Lat.*, 6684, f. 47 v.

worldly Knights of the Order were determined to exterminate him for having imprisoned their prostitutes (13).

In such a situation, it is not surprising that, during his seven years in Malta, Gori very often asked to be relieved of his office as Inquisitor. At first, the Pope, during his early years, did not take those petitions very seriously, until they became very pressing when the Inquisitor's life was in peril (14).

On 8th September, 1646, Gori was informed by Cardinal Pamphili, Secretary of State, that *Anthony Pignatelli*, the future Pope Innocent XII, had been chosen by the Roman Pontiff to place him as an Inquisitor of Malta. Gori obtained the faculty of leaving the Island after choosing an apt person to take charge of his office up to the arrival of the new Inquisitor (15). When Balaguer, the Bishop of Malta, was chosen by Gori as "*Pro-Inquisitor ad tempus*", he soon forgot all the former complaints against the Inquisitor (16). But if we scrutinize the words that the Bishop writes about the Inquisitor, after examining the facts in the light of the official documents, everything seems ironical or, at least, contradictory. According to the Bishop, when Gori left the Island, the Knights and the people of Malta felt an unusual sense of affliction because they had found in him a prudent and zealous minister in the regency of the Holy Office (17)!!!

Gori was really glad to leave the Island without even waiting for his successor. After fulfilling the conditions imposed on him, he left Malta

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13. "Sono in obbligo dar conto a Vostra Eminenza d'esser stato segretamente avvisato che diversi Cavalieri habbin risoluto di levarmi la vita per haver fatto carcerare delle loro meretrici": A.S.V., S.S., *Malta*, 7, f.127r.
14. "Essendo quattr'anni e mezzo che fui honorato da Sua Santità e da Vostra Eminenza dell'Inquisitione e della Delegatione Apostolica in Malta, quando non fusse contro la sua volontà, alla quale in tutto m'accquieto, supplicarei l'infinita benignità di Vostra Eminenza ad impetrarmi da Sua Beatitudine la gratia di qualche altro impiego": Bibl. Vat., *Barb. Lat.*, 6686, f. 42r.  
"Sono cinque anni . . . Perciò la supplico . . . la mutatione da quest'Isola": *Ib.*, f. 67r.  
For similar petitions to be relieved, see: A.S.V., S.S., *Malta*, 7, ff. 25r, 45r, 67r.
15. "Havendo la Santità di Nostro Signore destinato successore a Vostra Signoria in cotesta carica Monsignor Pignatelli, ne do a Lei quest'avviso acciò Ella sappia che è in arbitrio di Vostra Signoria il partir ad ogni suo volere di costà, dove Ella però dovrà, secondo il solito, lasciar soggetto habile al maneggio di quel che possa occorrere sino all'arrivo di Monsignor sudetto, che si muoverà di qua ben presto. Con che fine, auguro a Vostra Signoria prosperità di viaggio, e me le raccomando di cuore": A.S.V., S.S., *Malta*, 82, f. 21r.
16. "Ho eletto Monsignor Vescovo di Malta": *Ib.*, f. 128r.  
"Partendo Monsignor Gori, lasciò Pro-Inquisitore in Malta il Vescovo Balaguer, il che hebbe anco l'approvazione di Roma, e fu notato per cosa molto rara": A[rchives] M[alta], *Notizie per la carica d'Inquisitore*, f. 316v.
17. See Note 11.

immediately. He arrived very soon at Messina; but, unluckily, the galleys of the Holy See had just weighed anchor the day before. Then, he was obliged to cross to Naples on a felucca in order to reach Rome as soon as possible. He wrote to the Pope from Messina to inform him about his immediate departure and to beg pardon for his delay (18).

*A flashback on the administration of justice*

Without any doubt, Gori acted with good intentions. Personally, he was convinced that he was doing his best in the service of the Holy Office. His despatches are the reflection of sincerity. They describe an individual who could not understand why so many persons were against him. He was prompt to be deferential towards his superiors and his equals also with the intention of gaining a good number of influential friends.

The Maltese, however, considered him, not only too severe, but also unjust in some of his decisions. Gori was the representative of the Holy See and, consequently, his faults had a tremendous repercussion on the Tribunal of the Inquisition itself. He himself, however, never noticed that harm because, up to the end, he was still sure of his utmost fidelity to all his duties.

On the arrival of Anthony Pignatelli in December 1646, everything became clear. The Roman Supreme Tribunal itself noticed that the Malta Inquisition had practically lost its honour in few years' time and regretted that everything was in such a disorder (19).

Throughout the period of Pignatelli (1646-1649), many charges discredited Gori. He had not kept an eye on his ministers who sometimes abused of their powers and framed notorious falsities in trials. On account of one of those cases, the Roman Holy Office complained with horror to Pignatelli about Gori: "*The gravity of the case is manifest, the scandal should be removed, the dignity of the Holy Office ought to be restored*

18. "Poi che Vostra Eminenza s'è compiaciuta darmi la licenza di partirmi di Malta senz'aspettar Monsignor Pignatelli, mio successore, con deputar alcuno che fra tanto amministri quella carica, credendo per servizio delle cause della S. Fede che vertono non poter deputar chi meglio la poss'amministrare, ho eletto Monsignor Vescovo di Malta, e mi sono messo subito in viaggio per trovar le galere di Sua Santità a Messina, dove arrivato, ho trovato che il giorno avanti erano partite; e do conto a Vostra Eminenza che seguo il mio viaggio per Napoli con filuche, per esser a basciar quanto prima li piedi a Sua Santità . . . Di Messina, 13 ottobre 1646": A.S.V., S.S., *Malta*, 7, f. 128r.

19. "Spiace alla Sacra Congregatione che tutto sia così sconvolto": A.I.M., *Lettere*, 8, f. 207r.

" . . . con molto dispendio e discredito di cotesto Tribunale": *Ib.*, f. 235r.

because the evil caused cannot be expressed in words and seems to be absolutely irreparable" (20).

The Inquisitor, however, was not the only person to be deceived by his Ministers. The best known among his Consultors, the learned and pious Jesuit Priest Fr. Sebastian Salelles, well known especially in Canon Law for his research about the Holy Inquisition (21), was, by the Supreme Congregation, accused of inability. At that time, the venerable Jesuit was worn out and enfeebled with age. He had already served as Consultor to various Inquisitors for over forty years (22). On that occasion, he was rebuked by the Congregation of the Holy Office which wondered at the facility with which he had admitted the denunciations. Infact, that Congregation doubted whether old age had deprived him of the prudence required in such cases (23).

The Supreme Congregation, on hearing the continual appeals against Gori during the period of Pignatelli and after examining each of the particular cases presented, deemed it necessary to revoke some sentences and moderate or subject to revision some others. The Holy Office com-

20. "La gravezza del caso da sé si manifesta; il scandalo è necessario che sia tolto; il decoro del Tribunale ricerca ristoro; il male seguito è inesprimibile et irreparabile": *Ib.*, ff. 273v-274r.

21. See: S. Salelles, S.J., *De materiis Tribunalium S. Inquisitionis* (Roma, I, 1651, 318p., 1-73p; II, 1653,340p.; III, 1656,432p.).

22. See: A.S.V., S.S., *Malta*, ff. 379r-380v: *Rollo de Patentati del S. Offitio*. The following information, given in 1659 by Jerome Casanate, Inquisitor of Malta, demonstrates that Fr. Salelles had been dedicating his services for the benefit of the Maltese Inquisition for over fifty years; "Consultori: il P. Sebastiano Saleglies Gesuita, fatto l'anno 1605 da Mons. Diotallevi": *ib.*, f. 379r.

Also the Grand Master Lascaris nourished high respect towards this venerable Jesuit. Infact, when the Jesuits were, in 1639, expelled from the Island, there was an exception only for Fr. Salelles and Fr. Tedesco: "consentendosi che due solemente rimanessero qui, e questi furono il Padre Tedesco . . . et il Padre Saleglies, spagnuolo": *Bibl. Vat., Barb. Lat.*, 6690, f. 179v (a letter of March 10, 1639 sent by Grand Master Lascaris to Cardinal Barberini).

23. "Solo che questi miei Eminentissimi sono restati assai maravigliati della facilità del P. Saleglies; ma questo buon Padre, per altro dotto, deve con gli anni haver perduto di quella prudenza et avvedimento che sono necessari in casi somiglianti": *A.I.M., Lettere*, 8, f. 254r.

Nevertheless, the opinion that this pious Jesuit had of himself was completely different. It is enough to recall an extract of a letter sent to the Pope when he was already in his eighties. In his words, we can observe the lucidity of mind and a keen interest in theological discussion: "Vita mea . . . cum sit iam protracta ad aetatem valde decrepitam 84 annorum, quamquam quisquis me non agnoscit, meo prospecto vultu, et in eo juvenili colore prae animi exultatione semper retento, nequaquam 70 annorum mihi tribuit, imo nec 65. Scientes tamen meam longissimam moram 52 annorum in hac insula, dictam in me vetulam aetatem facile colligunt . . . Plures audio supplices libellos Sanctitati Vestrae oblatos pro honoranda Sanctissima Virgine Maria et de fide eius immaculatissima conceptione decidenda (quod a te exequutum speramus cito audire). At de illius dignissimo sponso, de Sanctissimo nostro Josepho nullus supplex libellus . . . Hunc a te exaltari maxime cupio cum maiori festo reposito extra

plained that so many persons were kept imprisoned without any sound reasons just out of vain pretexts and fantastical illusions (24).

Several persons were innocently punished for two long years on false charges brought against them; they had been denounced of having boiled a human creature with an act of apostasy, an invocation and adoration of the devil, abuses against the Holy Sacrament with filthiness ("con sporramento"), and other heretical profanities. That case demanded a particular consideration because it involved some persons who were highly respected and honoured (25). Gori was immersed in such a confusion that nothing could be clearly apprehended from a series of appeals, denunciations and accusations against the Holy Office itself. As a result of that, the Supreme Authorities in Rome felt constrained to forbid to the Inquisitor any further procedure in that matter without first receiving instructions from his Superiors (26). High Officials of the Holy Office

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Quadragesimam per 8 dies, ut solet, cum ieiunio in eius vigilia, cum iniunctione facta episcopis de celebrando pontificaliter prima die festi, cum expressione perpetua nominis Joseph post Beatam Mariam, ante S. Michael in letaniis maioribus, in Missa ad Confiteor, ad Canonem etc.; denique, cum strictissima prohibitione sub poenis, etc., ne ullus audeat affirmare quod S. Joseph secundam duxerit uxorem, et ex ea filios procreaverit, etc.": A.S.V., (*Lettere di diversi Particolari (a Sua Santità)*), 35, Lettera del P. Salelles da Malta, il 16 sett. 1657, f. 190r-v.

24. "Doppo che Vostra Signoria ha scoperto la vanità del processo del bollimento della creatura, sono questi miei Eminentissimi di parere ch'Ella termini cotesta causa conforme le parerà di giustizia, liberando hormai cotesta Inquisitione da *tanti prigionieri ritenuti con tanto poco fondamento*, e con pretesti aerei, e fantastiche illusioni": A.I.M., *Letters*, 8, f. 250r.
25. "Havendo fra l'altre cose in certo processo d'Inquisitione involupato i più honorati e bene stanti cittadini di questi luoghi con gran loro pregiudicio e nella fama e nella robba": A.A.M., *Notizie per la carica d'Inquisitore*, f. 316v.  
The following is an extract from the letter that the falsely charged persons presented to the Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office in order to regain the good name that once they enjoyed: "Cirillo Portelli, Dottor dell'una e l'altra legge e Consultore del S. Officio di Malta, humilissimo servitore dell'Eminenze loro, espone che, per malvagità delli Dottori Leonardo Xara, Assessore in causa, Giovanni Battista Farrugia, all'hora Avvocato de poveri, Don Salvatore Burlò, attuario, et il Notaro Natale Parmisciano, deputato per fiscale, offitiali del sudetto Tribunale del S. Officio, et altri complici, da doi anni in qua s'è trovato carcerato e processato d'un preteso bollimento di creatura con apostasia, invocatione et adoratione al demonio, abuso del Santissimo con sporramento, et altre qualità hereticali, delli quali, per gratia del Signore, così esso esponente, come altri pretesi complici, furono con publico spettacolo, sotto li due luglio 1648, dichiarati innocenti e dolosamente inquisiti e calunniati": A.I.M., *Lettere* 8, f. 271r.
26. The following is an extract from a letter sent by the Supreme Congregation, on 3rd September 1650, to the Inquisitor of Malta Charles Cavalletti: "Era di già spedita la causa di Monsignor Gori quand'è giunta a Roma la visita della stanza in cui s'asserisce esser fatto il bollimento della creatura. Il Farrugia è stato inhabilitato per sempre in cause del S. Officio et a Monsignor Gori fatto ordine di non proceder in essa senza particolare istruzione di questa Sacra Congregatione. Serva a Vostra Signoria d'avviso": *Ib.*, 9, f. 77r.

ran also the danger of being charged with maliciously false reports (27).

*An atonement for the unsparing Gori*

It was the hard labour of Pignatelli that successfully brought forth a change of opinion in judging the Tribunal of the Holy Inquisition. More than two years after Gori's departure from the Island, persons who had suffered injustices out of his final sentences were still crying against him and addressing their complaints to Rome in earnest and even importune demands so that they might be compensated for the evil suffered (28).

Pignatelli, after having discovered all the falsities and calumnies framed in those proceedings, opened the way for the triumph of justice. As a matter of fact, on 2nd July, 1648, they were publicly declared innocent (29).

The common voice of the Maltese did not accuse Gori just for his injustices, but also for his tyrannically severe sentences. Gori, who appeared so meek and benevolent in front of the Grand Master and the Bishop, quite often inflicted sentences of life imprisonment on the galleys of the Order. Such sentences, even in very serious denunciations, were never promulgated during the period of his immediate successor. The Supreme Congregation, on hearing those appeals, admitted that the sentences were extraordinarily severe. For the benefit of the Tribunal itself, the Holy Office tried to moderate them as much as possible.

Joseph Mercurio had been condemned to row on the galleys for all his life; but, after Gori's departure, the Holy Office in Rome granted him a revision of his case (30). In another similar case of life imprisonment on the galleys, the Supreme Congregation left the deliberation to be taken about the individual's freedom to the discretion of the Inquisitor Pigna-

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27. "Rimettono a Vostra Signoria questi miei Eminentissimi l'aggiunto memoriale di Cirillo Portelli, Dottore Maltese, a finch'ella consideri se vi siano degl'inditti da venire alla carcerazione di D. Salvatore Burlò e di Natale Parmigiano, suo sostituto, perchè non vi è diligenza anco istraordinaria che non sia ben spesa quando si tratta di far apparire che gl'inquisiti nel S. Ufficio siano stati calunniosamente e denunciati e deposti e la loro causa dai Ministri del Tribunale ingiustamente maneggiata": *Ib.*, 8, f. 270r. (A letter of 26th September 1648, sent by Cardinal Barberino to Inquisitor Anthony Pignatelli).
28. "Fanno gagliarde istanze appresso la Santità di Nostro Signore et a questa Sacra Congregatione d'esser ristorati dei danni ch'han patiti, e gridano contra Monsignor Gori": *Ib.*, f. 15r.
29. "Furno di poi dalla Sacra Congregatione di Roma dichiarati innocenti": A.A.M., *Notizie per la carica d'Inquisitore*, f. 316v. See also note 25.
30. "Gravasi Gioseppe Mercurio Maltese d'esser stato condannato da cotesto Tribunale alla galera in vita e perciò fa istanza che la sua causa sia riveduta in questa Sacra Congregatione. Questi miei Eminentissimi sono condiscesi alle sue istanze": A.I.M., *Lettere*, 8, f. 213r.



telli (31). The return from exile of Marianna D'Orlando was also decreed by the Roman Congregation, if it did not create any inconvenience on the Island (32).

While partly condemning the inquisitorship of Gori, it is important to notice that he was not the first Inquisitor to be rebuked by the Holy Office. Some others were even more guilty than Gori. Just for the sake of bringing an example, we mention only two instances. In 1613, the Holy Office obtained full knowledge about some scandals that had occurred in the time of the Inquisitor Leonetto Della Corbara (1607-1608); though he was already far away from Malta, the Holy Office was still seeking to apply a remedy because his faults had given rise to numerous scandals (33). The Inquisitor Evangelista Carbonese (1608-1614) as well was reprimanded by the Holy Office; in a certain case, he pretended to proceed against a priest; but he was informed that similar matters did not fall under his jurisdiction; besides, his trial was declared null by the Supreme Congregation and he was ordered to set free all the persons that he had confined into prison (34).

After seeing that the case of Gori was not unique in the history of the Malta Inquisition, we have to add that the Inquisitor Pignatelli had no personal hatred against him. His successor simply reported that the

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31. "Nel prudente arbitrio di Vostra Signoria rimettono questi Eminentissimi il liberare dal remo e 'l restituire al Priore di Sciampagna Tessancurt Trandafila da Limeno, condannato alla carcere in vita, e di là trasmesso alla galera, credendo l'Eminentissime loro ch'Ella sia per usar in ciò della sua solita prudenza": *Ib.*, f. 245r.
  32. "Nel tempo del suo predecessore fu da cotesta città esigliata Mariana D'Orlando. Vostra Signoria si contenti di certificarsi se il ritorno di lei possi partorire inconveniente alcuno, e secondo che ritroverà le conceda o neghi la gratia richiesta di poter ripatriare; poichè questi miei Eminentissimi all'arbitrio di Vostra Signoria la rimettono": *Ib.*, 9, f. 3r.
  33. "La Santità Sua m'ha ordinato che io scriva a Vostra Signoria che Ella dia avviso se costì tuttavia duri la diffamazione et scandalo de tali eccessi, o pure sia sopita et estinta la memoria di essi. Onde Ella s'informi di ciò con ogni segretezza et circospezzione et scriva quanto intorno a ciò occorre a Vostra Signoria": A.I.M., *Lettere*, 3, f. 63r (Card. Millino to Inquis. Carbonese, Dec. 20, 1613).  
"Si desiderano sapere da Vostra Signoria doi particolari: il primo, se il sodetto Monsignor mentre stava così, fu diffamato di questi delitti che si pretendono, et se dette scandalo; il secondo, se dura tuttavia la diffamazione et il scandalo": *Ib.*
  34. "L'Illustrissimo Signor Cardinale Doria, Arcivescovo di Palermo . . . avvisa che Vostra Signoria si è servita del nome del S. Officio in più modi nelle differenze occorse costì con Don Rocco Pirri. Di che fatto parte alla Santità di Nostro Signore, mi ha ordinato che io scriva a Vostra Signoria che Ella non doveva usare in ciò il titolo del S. Officio": A.I.M., *Lettere*, 2, f. 172r. (Card. Arigone to Inquis. Carbonese, Sept. 23, 1611).  
"La Santità Sua mi ha ordinato che io replichi a Vostra Signoria che non manchi liberar subito detto D. Rocco et suoi compagni . . . avvertendo di non procedere in modo alcuno all'esecuzione delle pene contenute nelle sentenze da Lei mandate, ma li rilasci liberi, con ricordarli che per l'avvenire non s'ingerisca ne i negotij che non spettano alla Santa Inquisitione": *Ib.*, f. 174r (Oct. 4, 1611).

Tribunal was in a state of confusion. It often happens, however, that a person invested with a new dignity exaggerates the pitious state of everything so that his efforts for a reformation may loom forth in a more conspicuous light.

Nevertheless, the judgement of Pignatelli was shared by many Maltese. The inhabitants of the Island took advantage of Pignatelli because they noticed that he was ready to help them against the injustices and severities of the Tribunal. The Inquisitor, however, stood aloof full of dignity, without ever uttering a single word against the person of Gori. He just obeyed the Supreme Tribunal and tried to find a remedy according to the dictates of justice.

In a report about the Inquisitors of Malta, preserved in the Royal Malta Library, a short negative judgement is given about Gori: "*He stayed in that office for seven years and four months, but with a very little satisfaction of the people*" (35). In other words, although he always had good intentions, Gori proved to be unfit for his office because, as an Apostolic Delegate, in his diplomatic relations with the Bishop and with the Grand Master, he was weak and often disliked for his lack of ability in balancing those two major authorities of the Island. As an Inquisitor, at the head of the Tribunal, the Maltese had no trust in him because they found him cruel and sometimes unjust.

Gori left Malta at his own request; but, indirectly, it was on the urgent demand of all the inhabitants of the Island because they always did their best to get rid of him (36).

In that critical period for the Holy Tribunal, when the Maltese has acquired a bad impression and could not hope for anything good and prosperous from the new Delegate of the Holy See, the Roman Pontiff Innocent X chose for Malta Anthony Pignatelli "*in order that, through his discretion, the Tribunal of the Holy Office might again appear necessary for the service of God and of the Catholic Church*" (37).

35. "In essa carica rimase per sette anni e mesi quattro, benchè con poca sodisfazione del publico": R[oyal] M[alta] L[ibrary], *Library*, 8, f. 215r.

36. In the above quoted report about the Maltese Inquisitors, we find the following words: "Monsignor Gori . . . per la sue asprezze era stato richiamato da Roma": A.A.M., *Notizie*, f. 316v. But this statement is not correct because the Supreme Congregation began to complain about Gori only after his departure from Malta.

37. "Spiace alla Sacra Congregazione che tutto sia così sconvolto; ma la prudenza di Lei saprà ben tosto ridurlo a quel segno ch'è necessario pel servizio di Dio e della Cattolica Religione": A.I.M., *Lettere*, 8, f. 207r.