



**HAL**  
open science

# The Renegades and the Roman Inquisition of Malta, 16th-17th centuries

Anne Brogini

► **To cite this version:**

Anne Brogini. The Renegades and the Roman Inquisition of Malta, 16th-17th centuries. Margaret Abdilla Cunningham; Kenneth Cassar; Godwin Vella. The Roman Inquisition in Malta and elsewhere, Heritage Malta, pp.172-183, 2017, 978-99932-57-39-4. hal-03597295

**HAL Id: hal-03597295**

**<https://hal.univ-cotedazur.fr/hal-03597295>**

Submitted on 10 Mar 2022

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

---

# RENEGADES AND THE ROMAN INQUISITION OF MALTA

## 16TH - 17TH CENTURIES

---

ANNE BROGINI



The confrontation between the Spanish and the Ottoman empires during the 16th century and the rise of the corso in the Mediterranean Sea during the 17th century, caused the increase of slaves and the chance of apostasies. The Knights of Malta and all Maltese corsairs caught many Christian renegades who were denounced to the Roman Inquisition. Between 1574 and 1670, 922 renegades, from all around the Mediterranean and Europe, were judged and punished in Malta. Their trials are a moving account of their lives.



In 1574, the first Inquisitor sent by the *Congregazione della suprema e universale Inquisizione*, established by Pope Paul III Farnese in 1542, settled in the port of Malta. The Order of Malta, who wanted to fight against the temptations of some Knights and several lay Maltese to convert to Protestantism, desired his establishment. Throughout the Early Modern period, Malta was the only Spanish island of the Western Mediterranean to possess a Roman Inquisitorial court. Very soon, the Inquisitor's work exceeded the simple defense of Catholicism against heresy, and more and more, specialized in the fight against a new threat to the identity and homogeneity of Maltese society: apostasy and conversion to Islam. During the 16th and 17th centuries, the Roman Inquisition played an important role in Malta, punishing transgressions and educating the Maltese through fear and the ignorance of otherness.

There is a vast quantity of research on Inquisitorial trials. The works of Bartolomé Bennassar,<sup>1</sup> Jean-Pierre Dedieu,<sup>2</sup> Catherine Brault-Noble and Marie-José Marc,<sup>3</sup> Jaime Contreras,<sup>4</sup> Raphaël Carrasco, Bernard Vincent,<sup>5</sup> Louis Cardaillac,<sup>6</sup> María Ghazali<sup>7</sup> for the Spanish Inquisition and Andrea Errera's study of the evolution of the Holy-Office's guides for the Roman Inquisitors<sup>8</sup> are all essential historiographical supports to understand the function of this institution charged with punishing dissidents and rehabilitating them, in order to reintegrate them into religious and moral conformity of the Catholic society.

- 
1. Bartolomé Bennassar, 'Le pouvoir inquisitorial', in B. Bennassar (dir.), *L'Inquisition espagnole (XVe-XIXe siècles)*, Pluriel, Hachette, Paris, 2001 (first édition in 1979), pp. 71-100; B. Bennassar, 'L'Inquisition ou la pédagogie de la peur', in B. Bennassar (dir.), *L'Inquisition espagnole...*, op. cit., pp. 101-138.
  2. Jean-Pierre Dedieu, 'L'Inquisition et le droit. Analyse formelle de la procédure inquisitoriale en cause de foi', in *Mélanges de la Casa de Valázquez*, XXIII, 1987, pp. 227-251; J. P. Dedieu, *L'administration de la foi. L'Inquisition de Tolède (XVIe-XVIIIe siècles)*, Bibliothèque de la Casa de Velázquez, 7, Madrid, 1992 (2nd edition).
  3. Catherine Brault-Noble and Marie-José Marc, 'L'unification religieuse et sociale: la répression des minorités', in B. Bennassar (dir.), *L'Inquisition espagnole, XVe-XIXe siècles, Paris, Fayard, 2001*, op. cit., pp. 139-192.
  4. Jaime Contreras, *Pouvoir et Inquisition en Espagne au XVIe siècle*, Aubier Histoires, Paris, 1997 (*Regidores, Inquisidores y criptojudíos*, Madrid, 1992).
  5. Bernard Vincent, 'L'Inquisition et l'Islam', in *Monitor ISH*, Vol. IV, n°1-4, 2002, pp. 7-14.
  6. Louis Cardaillac (dir.), *Les Morisques et l'Inquisition*, Publisud, Paris, 1990.
  7. María Ghazali, 'La procédure inquisitoriale espagnole', in *Autour de l'Inquisition. Etudes sur le Saint-Office*, Université de Picardie, Indigo, Paris, 2002, pp. 103-130 ; M. Ghazali (dir.), *Les Morisques. D'un bord à l'autre de la Méditerranée*, Cahiers de la Méditerranée, 79, Nice, 2009 (<http://cdlm.revues.org/4897>) ; M. Ghazali (dir.), *Captifs et captivités en Méditerranée à l'époque moderne*, Cahiers de la Méditerranée, 87, 2013 (<http://cdlm.revues.org/7134>).
  8. Andrea Errera, *Processus in causa fidei. L'evoluzione dei manuali inquisitoriali nei secoli XVI-XVII e il manuale inedito di un Inquisitore perugino*, Moduzzi Editore, Bologna, 2000.

Important Maltese research has also been undertaken on works by Alexander Bonnici<sup>9</sup> for the history of the Inquisition of Malta, Frans Ciappara<sup>10</sup> on the trials during the 18th century, and Carmel Cassar<sup>11</sup> about Maltese witchcraft during the 16th and 17th centuries.<sup>12</sup> Concerning the renegades, several studies were conducted mainly in the 1980s, by Lucile and Bartolomé Bennassar<sup>13</sup> concerning 1550 renegades, by Anita Gonzalez Raymond<sup>14</sup> for the Inquisitorial courts of Sicily, Sardinia and Balearics, and by Francesco Renda<sup>15</sup> for the Sicilian Inquisition in the Early Modern period. The Roman Inquisition and the renegades in Italy have been studied by Lucia Rostagno,<sup>16</sup> who analysed the process of apostasy and the confrontation between the Inquisitor and the renegades.

The numerous Maltese archives of the 16th and 17th centuries enable one to study these renegades judged in Malta, the famous 'Corsair State' of the Western Mediterranean, as well as to study the procedure of these trials, the ritual of *auto-da-fé*, and help us to identify the essential role played by the Roman Inquisition in the affirmation and preservation of the religious frontier in Malta.

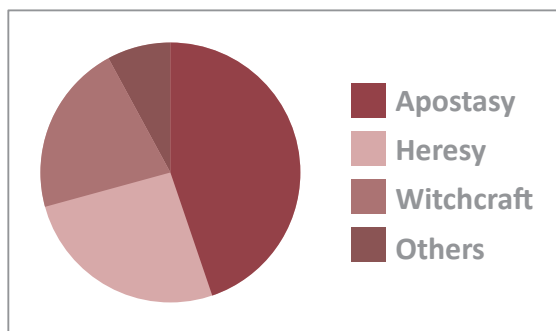
## RENEGADES IN MALTA, AN IMPORTANT REALITY

During the 16th and 17th centuries, the renegades faced with by the Roman Inquisition in Malta represented a very important phenomenon. Between 1580 and 1670, trials for apostasy represented almost half of Maltese trials (44,7%), the other trials were related to heresy (24,4%), witchcraft (22,7%), and various other convictions (8,2%) such as blasphemy, bigamy, etc.

- 
9. Alexander Bonnici, *Medieval and Roman Inquisition in Malta*, PEG Ltd, Malta, 1998.
  10. Frans Ciappara, *Society and the Inquisition in Early Modern Malta*, PEG Lt, Malta, 2000.
  11. Carmel Cassar, *Witchcraft, Sorcery and the Inquisition. A Study of cultural values in Early Modern Malta*, Mireva Publications, Malta, 1998; C. Cassar, *Sex, magic and the periwinkle*, Pubblikazzjonijiet Indipendenza, Malta, 2000; C. Cassar, *Daughters of Eve. Women, Gender Roles and the impact of the Council of Trent in Catholic Malta*, Mireva Publications, Malta, 2002.
  12. C. Cassar, *Society, Culture and Identity in Early Modern Malta*, Mireva Publications, Malta, 2000.
  13. Bartolomé and Lucile Bennassar, *Les Chrétiens d'Allah. Histoire extraordinaire des renégats (XVIe-XVIIe siècles)*, Perrin, Paris, 1989.
  14. Anita Gonzalez Raymond, *La croix et le croissant. Les Inquisiteurs et les îles face à l'Islam, 1550-1700*, Editions du CNRS, Paris, 1992.
  15. Francesco Renda, *L'Inquisizione in Sicilia. I fatti. Le persone*, Sellario Editore, Palermo, 1997.
  16. Lucia Rostagno, *Mi faccio Turco. Esperienze ed immagini dell'Islam nell'Italia moderna*, Istituto per l'Oriente, Roma, 1983.

## NUMBER OF SENTENCES BY THE INQUISITION OF MALTA (1580-1670)

	Convictions	%
Apostasy	920	44,7
Heresy	503	24,4
Witchcraft	467	22,7
Others	167	8,2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2057</b>	<b>100</b>



AIM, Processi 5 to 73A (1580-1670)

Between 1580 and 1670, 920 renegades were judged by the Inquisitor of Malta, almost the same amount (965) recorded by Bartolomé and Lucile Bennassar in the three Spanish Inquisitorial courts of the Balearics, Sicily and Sardinia during the same period.<sup>17</sup> Several reasons explained this abundance of trials. Since the end

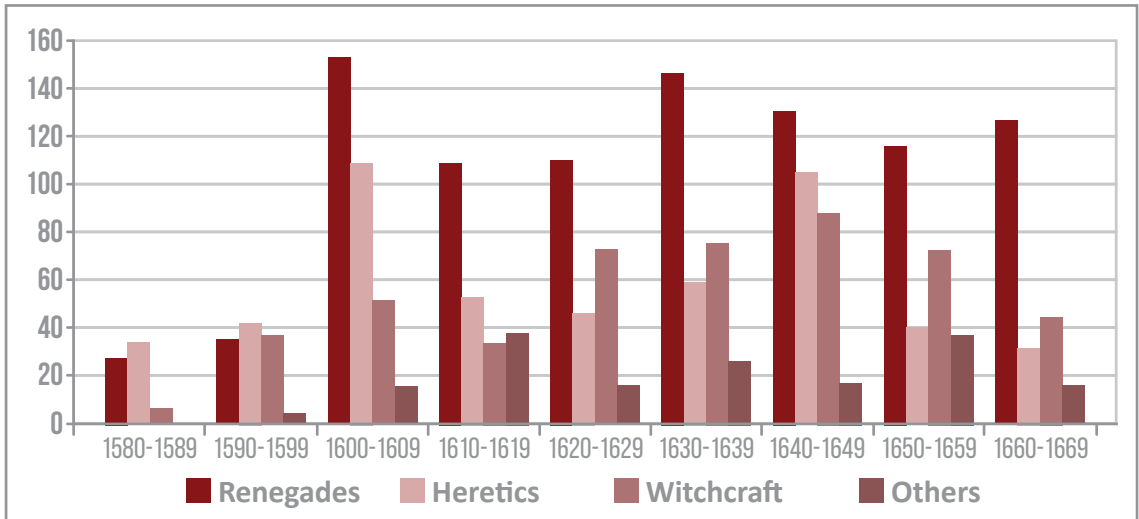
of the 16th century, after the peace between Spanish and Ottoman empires in 1577, and throughout the 17th century, Malta became a leading 'Corsair State' on the Christian shore of the Western Mediterranean and was a turn plate in the trading of Jew and Muslim slaves taken by Maltese Knights and by various Catholic 'pirates'.<sup>18</sup> Among these Muslim slaves, many were renegades – Christians who renounced their religion to embrace Islam. After the victory of the Great Siege in 1565, Malta became the frontier of Christendom and as a result a strong religious control was required, both of the port and of the foreigners who entered the Grand Harbour, officially constituted by four towns since 1571 – date of the installation of the Knights in Valletta: the 'Three-Cities' (Vittoriosa, Senglea, Bormla) and the new capital Valletta. The Islands' administration by three political and religious authorities (Knights of Malta, Maltese clergy and Roman Inquisition) shows a voluntary closing of its frontier, frequently overlooked as the Island's Grand Harbour developed its slave trade thus opening the frontier of the Christian Corsair State at the same time.<sup>19</sup>

17. B. and L. Bennassar, *Les Chrétiens d'Allah. L'histoire extraordinaire des renégats (XVIe-XVIIe siècles)*, Perrin, Paris, 1989.

18. Anne Brogini, 'Au cœur de l'esclavage méditerranéen, Malte aux XVIe-XVIIe siècles', in Simonetta Cavaciocchi (dir.), *Schiavitù e servaggio nell'economia europea (secc. XI-XVIII)*, Serie II – Atti della Settimana di Studi, 45 (14-18 avril 2013), Le Monnier, Florence, 2014, pp. 539-553.

19. A. Brogini, *Malte, frontière de chrétienté (1530-1670)*, BEFAR, 325, Rome, 2006 (<http://books.openedition.org/efr/101?lang=fr>).

## THE EVOLUTION OF SENTENCES (1580-1670)



AIM, *Processi* 5 to 73A (1580-1670)

We can observe a decrease in trials for heresy after 1600-1609. Until the beginning of the 17th century, the control of English ships was extremely strong in Malta. Often, during a stop in the port, several crew members were arrested and condemned for heresy by the Inquisitor, such as in 1582 when seven sailors were condemned without any motive other than that they were English.<sup>20</sup> But after the peace signed in 1604 between the kingdoms of Spain and England, all English crews on merchant ships entering the Maltese harbour could no longer be worried by the Inquisitor,<sup>21</sup> thus causing a sudden decrease in trials for heresy. From then on, only the English captured aboard corsair boats appeared before the Inquisitor and were tried for heresy.<sup>22</sup> The second reason for this decrease was the gradual disappearance of the heretic threat in Malta, as elsewhere in Europe, where religious divisions between Catholic and Protestant areas were now official and accepted. The Sicilian Inquisitorial trials had the same evolution as those of Malta: after the end of 16th century, there is a decrease in sentences against Protestants.<sup>23</sup> After 1605, strict rules controlled the presence of English merchants and sailors in the Grand Harbour: they had to stay on board, and when they disembarked, they were forbidden to talk about religion with Catholics or to defame the Church; otherwise, they would be condemned by the Inquisitor.<sup>24</sup> In 1607, these rules were extended to the Dutch and the Flemish.<sup>25</sup>

20. AIM, Proc. 6C, ff. 1217r-1256r, May 1582.

21. ACDF, St.St. M 4-b, f. 8r, 1605.

22. ACDF, St.St. M 4-b, f. 7r, 29 February, 1604.

23. A. Gonzalez Raymond, *La croix et le croissant. Les Inquisiteurs et les îles face à l'Islam, 1550-1700*, CNRS, Paris, 1992.

24. ACDF, St.St. M 4-b, f. 15r, 1605.

25. ACDF, St.St. Q 3-d, f. 123r, 23 November, 1607.

There is a very important increase of trials at the beginning of the 17th century concerning the renegades (more than 140 sentences between 1600 and 1609), linked to the development of the Maltese *corso*. The same evolution can be observed in Leghorn, when the Knights of Santo Stefano's corsair activity brought on an influx of slaves in the middle of the 17th century.<sup>26</sup> This important number of renegades is particularly fascinating in Malta as the island is small and its Inquisitorial court was assisted with less people than the Spanish courts in other Spanish islands. The reason is obviously related to the number of slaves. In 1599, a report written by the Guard of the Prison of Slaves in Vittoriosa and Valletta wrote to the Grand Master: "among the 1,600 slaves of the Order, children and adults, there were at least 600 renegades".<sup>27</sup> A third of the slaves were renegades. In Malta, Muslims were no less feared than the Jews or Protestants, however, the fear was different: while Jews and 'heretics' were an internal threat to Christendom, Muslims were a religious and political danger, a rivalry to Christian civilization.<sup>28</sup>

## PORTRAITS OF RENEGADES

### ORIGIN OF THE RENEGADES SENTENCED IN MALTA (1580-1670)

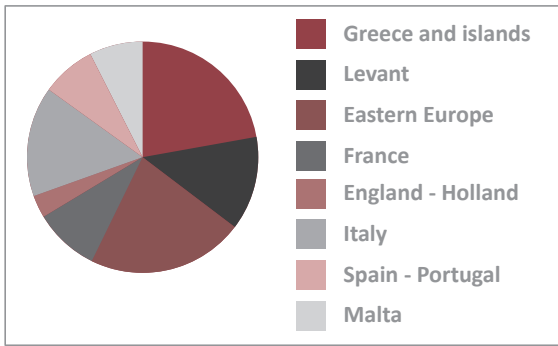
ORIGIN	NUMBER	%
Greece and islands	214	23,2
Levant	85	9,2
Eastern Europe	212	23
<b>Eastern Mediterranean</b>	<b>511</b>	
France	96	10,4
England - Holland	37	4
Italy	114	12,4
Spain - Portugal	85	9,3
Malta	69	7,5
<b>Western Mediterranean</b>	<b>409</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>100</b>

AIM, *Processi 5 to 73A (1580-1670)*

26. L. Rostagno, *Mi faccio Turco. Esperienze ed immagini dell'Islam nell'Italia moderna*, Istituto per l'Oriente, Roma, 1983, pp. 40-41.

27. AIM, Proc. 18, f. 69r, 14 December, 1599, Mariano Carbu's report.

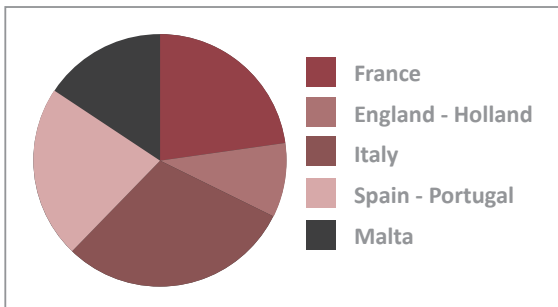
28. B. Vincent, 'L'Inquisition et l'Islam', in *Monitor IHS*, Vol. IV, n°1-4, 2002, p. 12.



More than 55% of the Renegades condemned in Malta came from the Eastern Mediterranean. This percentage distinguishes Malta from other Inquisitorial courts of the Western Mediterranean, where Italians and Spanish renegades dominated.<sup>29</sup> The Hospitallers' *corso* focused on the Levant: Knights and Maltese corsairs

boarded and searched Ottoman galleys and slaves who were from Greece, the Balkans and Russia, especially during the 17th century.<sup>30</sup> Slaves who came from Greece or the Balkans were generally boys of the *devshirme*; slaves who came from Russia were usually caught by Turks or Tartars in Christian lands, and taken to the Black Sea or to Istanbul, where they were sent as slaves. The strong presence of Greek renegades results from the many corsair raids which were conducted by the Knights between 1600 and 1620, along the Greek coasts. These attacks against the Ottoman castles allowed the capture of soldiers, and also many people (Greek peasants), including several women who were 'given' by their parents to Turkish soldiers, or who were held in slavery by Muslims, or had become wives of Turkish soldiers.

#### ORIGIN OF THE RENEGADES OF THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (1580-1670)



AIM, Processi 5 to 73A (1580-1670)

The renegades from the Western Mediterranean and Northern Europe represented 44% of the trials. Italians were the most numerous (28%), Spanish and Portuguese represented 21% of the trials. Spanish and Italians represented 50% of the renegades. Their presence could be explained by

their location close to the Muslim world. They were more easily captured than others by corsairs from the Barbary Coast. Consequently, 43% of the Italian renegades were from Sicily, Calabria, Naples, and 52% of the Spanish renegades were from the Balearic and Spanish coasts. Between 1615 and 1625, we observe an important increase in the number of Spanish renegades: they were Grenadians, Cordovans, or Sevillans,

29. B. et L. Bennassar, *Les Chrétiens d'Allah...*, op. cit., p. 150.

30. Michel Fontenay, 'Chiourmes turques au XVIIe siècle', in *Genti del mare mediterraneo*, Bibliothèque d'histoire économique, Naples, 1981, pp. 891-892 ; M. Fontenay, *La Méditerranée entre la Croix et le Croissant. Navigation, commerce, course et piraterie (XVIe-XIXe siècle)*, Classiques Garnier, Paris, 2010, Chapter 8 'L'empire ottoman et le risque corsaire au XVIIe siècle', pp. 357-390 and Chapter 9 'Interlope et violence maritime: les eaux grecques au XVIIe siècle', pp. 391-406.



all Moriscos who were expelled from Spain in 1609, and who migrated to North Africa.<sup>31</sup> The French represented 24% of the renegades. They were from the ports of Marseilles, Toulon, Six-Fours, Saint-Tropez, Cassis... French corsairs and merchants were numerous in Malta from the end of the 16th century. The English and Dutch represented 9% of the renegades in Malta. They appear in the archives from about 1620, when they arrived in the Mediterranean sea. The Maltese represented 17% of the renegades and they became more numerous during the 17th century because of their involvement in the Maltese *corso*.

Ninety percent of the renegades were men. Usually, when they appeared in front of the Inquisitor, they were 25 years old. They were very young because they had jobs which required a young, healthy body: sailors, soldiers, corsairs... On the contrary, women were almost absent because it was unusual for a woman to board a boat, except when they travelled with their husband. More often than not, women were caught during coastal raids.

## THE TRIAL PROCEDURE

During the trial, the Inquisitors of Malta used textbooks and directives regularly sent by the Holy Office based in Rome. One of these first textbooks was Nicolau Eymerich's book, *Directorium inquisitorum*, written at the end of the 14th century (1376), but printed for the first time in 1503, and reprinted five times between 1578 and 1607 (three times in Rome in 1578, 1585 and 1587). The Roman edition of 1578 was commentated by the Inquisitor Francisco Peña who added comments for helping Inquisitors to recognize heretics and apostates. This new version was regularly shipped to the Roman Inquisitors stationed in the courts of Italy and Malta as it stated what convictions were appropriate.<sup>32</sup> Firstly, the Inquisitor had to ask the accused – who did not know what he was being accused of – if he knew the reason of his appearance: this open question automatically made the suspect feel guilty and often brought forth the revelation of other sins than those for which he was denounced, thus prolonging the trial and imprisonment in the Inquisitorial prisons! Then, the Inquisitor asked several questions in order to better discover the truth; he also had to tell the accused, during the first ten days of his detention, that he would be more merciful if the accused immediately confessed his fault.<sup>33</sup>

---

31. A. Brogini, 'Les morisques devant le Saint-Office romain de Malte (1613-1622)', in María Ghazali (dir.) *Les Morisques. D'un bord à l'autre de la Méditerranée, Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, 79, Nice, 2009, pp. 373-387.

32. Nicolau Eymerich, Francisco Peña, *Le manuel des inquisiteurs*, Albin Michel, Paris, 2001 (first edition in 1973), p. 19.

33. N. Eymerich, F. Peña, *Le manuel des inquisiteurs*, op. cit., pp. 161-162.

Concerning the apostasy, Eymerich's book commentated by Francisco Peña condemned conversion to Judaism or Islam with severe penalties, such as a large fine, caning, imprisonment and even death, in severe cases where the accused persisted.<sup>34</sup> But when the trials for apostasy multiplied in Malta at the end of the 16th century, the Holy Office in Rome considered useful in 1594 to write and send the first *Istruzioni* for the Inquisitors in place in the island.<sup>35</sup>

These first Instructions were relatively imprecise and restricted to a few questions the Inquisitor had to ask during the trial: Had the renegade been forced to recant his faith? Had he recanted in order to escape death? Had he renounced Catholicism *con il cuore*, being sure of salvation thanks to Islam, or had he renounced *con la bocca*, thus remaining a Christian at heart?<sup>36</sup> In 1597, the Holy Office added new questions and sent these new Instructions to Maltese Inquisitors: did the Renegade sincerely believe in Islam? Had he recanted his faith to flee from Muslim lands and join Christendom? Was he circumcised? After apostasy and circumcision, was he called with a Muslim name? Did he live as a Muslim, praying at the mosque, believing in Muhammad and following Muslim rites? Did he keep the Christian faith at heart?<sup>37</sup>

From 1597, these Instructions gave a structure to the Inquisitorial speech which would not change for the next two centuries. Maltese trials became longer, questions were more numerous and the renegades' expected answers became more precise and detailed. Between 1600 and 1605, new questions appeared concerning circumcision, whether they had ever had a Muslim name, concerning the *shahada* pronounced during the public ceremony of apostasy, and if the renegades believed in the Prophet. In 1600, the Inquisitor asked Nicolò Vetero to narrate his circumcision, which generally accompanied the apostasy.<sup>38</sup> From that date on, circumcision was mentioned in all the trials, becoming the very symbol of apostasy, even before the issue of the *shahada*. The trend was similar concerning Muslim names: in 1600, for the first time, the Inquisitor asked Micheli of Mytilene to give his Muslim name (Mahamat) and to say whether he considered this name as his own.<sup>39</sup> From that date on, the evocation of the Muslim name thus became a constant for Maltese trials throughout the 17th century. Questions about the *shahada* appeared in 1603 when the Inquisitor asked Thomas Vince to repeat the words said by renegades: Thomas had been through the streets, raising his index finger

---

34. N. Eymerich, F. Peña, *Le manuel des inquisiteurs*, op. cit., pp. 105-106.

35. ACDF, St.St. Q 3-d, ff. 39v-40r, 22 July, 1594.

36. ACDF, St.St. Q 3-d, ff. 39v-40r.

37. ACDF, St.St. Q 3-d, ff. 39r-39v, 14 January, 1597.

38. AIM, Proc. 17, f. 53r, 18 June, 1600.

39. AIM, Proc. 19A, f. 68v, 28 December, 1600.

and shouting “*Allah, Allah*” in front of many Muslims.<sup>40</sup> The Russian Gregori narrated that he raised his index and said “*Lai Lai Halla Mehemet rasu lhala*”.<sup>41</sup>

Influenced by the Inquisitors’ questions and by the various sentences, renegades understood very soon how to justify and minimize their apostasy. They gradually built a defense to escape the harshest punishments and their arguments changed during the 17th century, in accordance to the Inquisitors’ questions. They said firstly that they were forced to recant their religion because of physical or psychological violence. In 1626, Antonio said that his master constantly mistreated him, in order that he should renounce his faith as soon as possible.<sup>42</sup> Several renegades justified their apostasy as the only condition to escape and rejoin Christian lands.<sup>43</sup> This defense was often presented in the trials of the late 16th century, but disappeared during the 17th century, in favour of arguments such as coercion, abuse and renegades’ gullibility. In 1624, Gioanne explained that his apostasy resulted both from his youth (15 years old) and his gullibility:

“...all the time, they brought me several Turkish books and read them to me, saying that I should absolutely believe that their religion was the best and could save me, and finally I believed them”.<sup>44</sup>

Another defense was the apostasy “by mouth”, keeping Catholicism at heart: in 1625, Jasco said that although he had lived 10 years as a renegade, he had always retained his original faith at heart.<sup>45</sup> From the 1620s, to evoke Christian parents, or the wish to die as a Christian, were strong arguments used by renegades to impress Inquisitors. Final arguments to prove that they were not renegades were not having attended mosques or not having eaten pork. In 1606, Crusafa said she had eaten pork whenever she could, to prove that she had remained a Christian!<sup>46</sup>

Renegades who proclaimed their apostasy were few and far between and their arguments were totally different from others: they talked about their friendship with Muslim people; they explained that they could not return to their past life because they now had children or husband or family in Muslim Lands;<sup>47</sup> they claimed to be

---

40. AIM, Proc. 21A, f. 254v, 23 March, 1603.

41. AIM, Proc. 21B, f. 554r, 1 February, 1603.

42. AIM, Proc. 45A, f. 132r, 18 May, 1626.

43. AIM, Proc. 7B, f. 610v, 19 March, 1585 (Andrea from Famagusta).

44. AIM, Proc. 44A, f. 91v, 7 September, 1624.

45. AIM, Proc. 44A, f. 38v, 6 March, 1625.

46. AIM, Proc. 31B, f. 298v, 19 September, 1606.

47. AIM, Proc. 23B, f. 752v, 8 February, 1605. (Marco from Tripoli); AIM, Proc. 24B, f. 643r, 7 December, 1606 (Isabella from Cyprus).

Muslims and they wanted to die as Muslims.<sup>48</sup> Of course, these unusual culprits were punished more severely than others by the Inquisition.

The aim of a trial was to obtain the renegade's confession and his return to the Church and Catholic society. The confession was called *auto-da-fé* (act of faith). The *auto-da-fé* was simple and individual for the renegades who appeared voluntarily before the Inquisitorial Court and the ceremony took place in the Inquisitor's Palace. When the *auto-da-fé* was public, it was a collective ceremony in front of all the religious and political authorities of the island, where culprits proclaimed their attachment to the Catholic faith. With a lighted candle in the hand, they walked together to the Church of St Lawrence; after the Mass, the culprits and Maltese people listened to a sermon on apostasy and the culprits' spiritual condemnations (prayers, fasting...) as well as physical condemnations. Usually, men were condemned to the galleys (3 years, 5 years, 10 years), in order to support the Maltese corsair activity. Women, more often than not, were condemned to whipping, or prison or to serving as domestic servants. All those convicted wore a yellow dress with a red cross (clothe of infamy) named *abitello* in the Roman Inquisition and *sanbenito* in the Spanish Inquisition.

The *auto-da-fé* symbolized a new christening and a return to the Church. It also reflected a very controlled society, in which any lapse was punished. Between 1580 and 1670, the Maltese Inquisitorial court received many denunciations. This behavior resulted from a *pédagogie de la peur*:<sup>49</sup> a fear of public arrest, a fear of prison, a fear of torture, a fear of the trial procedure, a fear of punishment, a fear of infamy... To reduce this fear, Catholic people denounced others, showing their good faith and their support for religious authorities.

---

48. AIM, Proc. 6B, f. 885r, 2 March, 1581 (Ali from Tripoli); AIM, Proc. 42A, f. 150r, 4 February, 1622 (Andronico).

49. B. Bennassar, "Le pouvoir inquisitorial", in B. Bennassar (dir.), *L'Inquisition espagnole...*, op. cit., p. 101.

