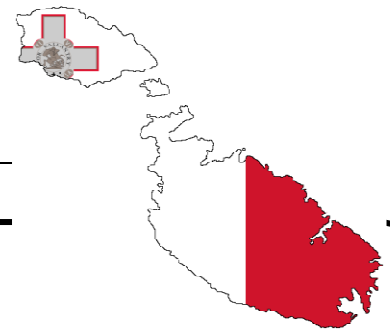


S4.1 Maltese Personalities



S4.1.1

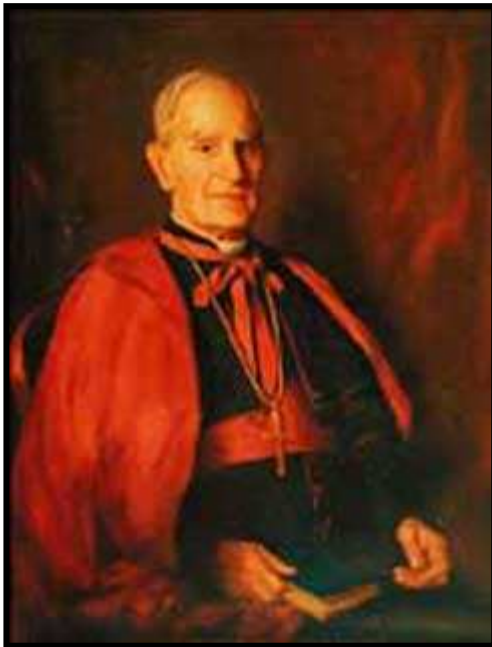
We will research three renowned personalities.

Contributors:

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Dun Karm Psaila



In a time when the Maltese language was not appreciated by those who had a high level of education, Dun Karm Psaila was one of the first to start writing in Maltese. At first, Dun Karm used to write his poems in Italian, like the other poets. Dun Karm felt like giving up but then he knelt down in front of the portrait of Our Lady, in his room and prayed for her help. That same evening, Dun Karm wrote his first poem in Maltese entitled *Quddiem Xbieha*

tal-Madonna (In front of the Image of Our Lady). At the time, that is 1912, Dun Karm was 41 years old.

Dun Karm was born at Żebbuġ, Malta on the 18th October 1871. His mother and father were from Żebbuġ and came from a family of farmers. Whilst his mother was a house wife, his father was a sailor, so Dun Karm could not spend a lot of time with him.

Dun Karm's first school was Żebbuġ Primary State School. He was a young, healthy boy and this was the best time of his life. Immediately after, he went to the Seminary, from where, at the age of 23, he became a priest. Besides being a priest, Dun Karm was also a teacher. He was a friendly, lively teacher and during his free time he enjoyed playing the mandolin.



A monument dedicated to Dun Karm
St Ann Street, Floriana

Although at this time, Dun Karm had started writing some poems in Italian, his rise as a poet came when he was 41 years old.

One morning, two writers, Monsigneur Paul Galea and Ġużè Muscat Azzopardi, met Dun Karm at Valletta. They told him that they were going to publish a newspaper in Maltese, *Il-Ħabib*, (*The Friend*) and they invited him to write a nice poem in Maltese for the first edition.

Even though, Dun Karm had always loved our language, till then he'd only written poems in Italian. At first, he was about to give up, but after praying to Our Lady, he wrote his first Maltese poem "*Quddiem Xbieha tal-Madonna*." (*In front of the Image of Our Lady*). This was in 1912 when he was 41 years old.

From that day onwards, Dun Karm wrote many poems in Maltese. Amongst these we find "Innu ta' Filgħodu (Reġa' sebaħ ...)" (Morning Anthem), "Innu ta' Filgħaxija (Riesaq il-lejl Mulejja ...)" (Evening Anthem), "Innu lill-Madonna (Fil-ħlewwa ta' Mejju ...)" (Anthem to Our Lady) and, above all "l-Innu Malti" (The Maltese Anthem) and a large number of beautiful poems about our country which earned him the title of National Poet.

Dun Karm lived a quiet, solitary life. For some time, his only friend was a small, yellow canary to which he dedicated the poem "Lill-Kanarin tiegħi" (To my Canary). Dun Karm was a deep thinker and had a pure love towards our language till the day he died, on the 13th October 1961, when he was almost 90.

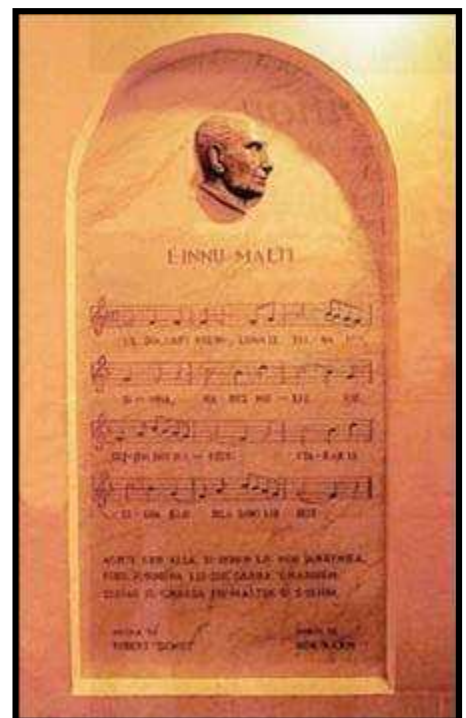
THE MALTESE ANTHEM

Lyrics: Dun Karm Psaila

Music: Robert Samut

Lil din l-art ħelwa, l-omm li tatna isimha,
Ħares, Mulej, kif dejjem int ħarist;
Ftakar li lilha bl-oħla dawl libbist.

Agħti kbir Alla, id-dehen lil min jaħkimha,
Rodd il-ħniena lis-Sid, saħħa 'l-ħaddiem;
Seddaq il-għaqda fil-Maltin u s-sliem.



(Bless this lovely country, O Lord, as You have always done. Give its leaders wisdom and kindness. Give its workers strength. Keep the Maltese people peacefully united.)

