

Guze Cardona 1922 - 1988



Fr Hermann Duncan

Guze Cardona and two of his novels

Guze Cardona was born in Qormi on 30 March 1922 to Joseph and Romualda née Azzopardi. He attended school at the Augustinian Sisters, in his native village, and then continued Primary and Secondary Schooling at St Aloysius College in Birkirkara.

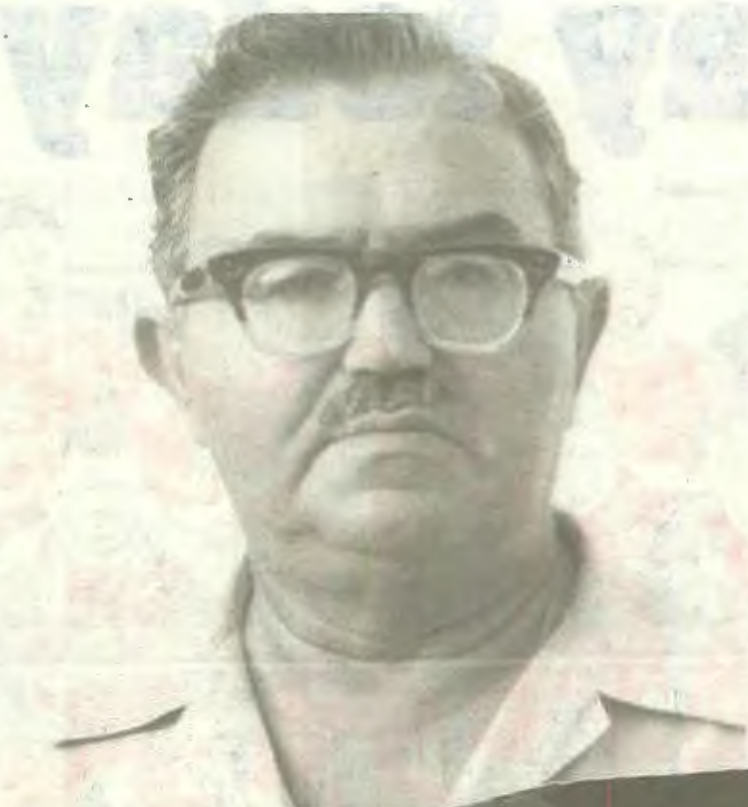
In 1945 he began the preparatory course of Pharmacy and Medicine but didn't feel this was his calling. Soon after he began his career as a Maltese teacher. He became a member of the Association of Maltese at the University of Malta and Secretary of Broadcasting and Propaganda between 1945 and 1947.

On 26 January 1948 he joined the Department of Education as a Substitute Teacher in Primary Schools. The following year he married Violet Schranz with whom he had two children, Marie Antoinette and George.

Cardona continued to teach in local government schools and in 1958 he became a regular teacher, and a year later was appointed Master. Until 1960 he taught at the Lyceum but interrupted his teaching to pursue a Bachelor of Arts course. In June 1964, he successfully completed a four-year course and obtained a BA (Hons.) in Maltese. Following this, in the summer of 1967, he successfully concluded a two-year course leading to the conferment of the Degree of Master of Arts in November 1967. His theses was based on the poet Dun Karm, 'Hajtu u Hiedmietu' (His life and his works), which was later broadcast by the Klabb Kotba Malti'.

In October of that same year he resumed teaching Maltese at the Secondary Technical School for Boys in Naxxar, the Lyceum and Junior College. He continued teaching till 1967 when he was awarded a one year British Council Scholarship in England, where he studied Semitic Studies at Darwin University College in Cambridge, England.

It is worth noting that Darwin University College gave Cardona the opportunity to return to Cambridge for an additional year to finalise his reading for a PhD in



Maltese. Unfortunately, he was unable to attend as his employer refused him paid study leave. His attempts to convince his employer to reconsider this decision had an adverse effect on his career leading him to be transferred to posts which didn't do justice to his grade, acumen and qualifications.

Nonetheless between October 1968 and 1973 he was appointed a part time lecturer at St Michael's Teachers' Training College for males and full-time lecturer at Mater Admirabilis Teachers' Training College for females. During this period he was also a part time lecturer at the University of Malta.

In 1973 he was appointed Staff Lecturer at the Malta College of Education. Three years later he was appointed Assistant Head of the Department for Maltese at Grade III.

Between 1976 and 1983 he continued to teach Maltese at the Upper Secondary School, Birkirkara Girls' Secondary School, and Gżira Boys' Secondary School. Finally on 30 March 1983 at the age of 61, he retired.

He sadly passed on to eternal life on 15 February 1988 and was buried at the Reżurezzjoni Cemetery in Qormi.

Writings and Publications

Cardona was an avid writer and wrote various historical and biographic articles on Qormi, St George and persons born there, including 'Il-bini tal-knisja ta' San Ġorġ ta' Hal Qormi', 'Il-knisja Parrokjali ta' San Ġorġ ta' Hal Qormi', 'Hal Qormi jehles mill-ġasar', 'Stanislaw Gatt', 'Kap tar-Riġment tal-Belt Pinto', 'Il-pittur u kantant Guze Duca', 'Guze Muscat Azzopardi' and 'Il-pittur li miet f'San Ġorġ'.

He also wrote various religious biographies about renowned people such as Mother Theresa

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Spinelli, the founder of the Augustinian Sisters, and Mother Paola Frassinetti, the founder of the Sisters of St Dorothy.

Cardona wrote a series of eight short novels that were published in *L'Anglu tal-Paċi*. He also wrote two longer novels one entitled 'Manwel Gellel' published in 1961 and another entitled 'Zmien il-Qerda' that was never published during his lifetime but in 2019. The two were republished together.

According to Professor Briffa, novel writing, for Cardona, was one of the most important ways in which ideas and values could be made accessible and understood by the general public. These comprised discussions, and sometimes digressions of, principled human behaviour. In these discussions, he needed the external narrator whose words were presented in a narrative form that apart from suggesting something fictitious, added to the sense of reality. His narrator acted as an agent of perception that helped produce a disciplined Christian attitude.

Cardona had various unpublished works like the biography of the well known Maltese philanthropist Sidor Formosa. Although all research and writing had been finalised, it was not published until after his death in 1988.

In 1985 he wrote 'Alter Cristus' which was an Oratorio based on the life of St Francis of Assisi. Mastro Carmelo Pace composed the music score. Excerpts were performed by the St Julians' choir at the Cathedral in Mdina after the author's death.

Further research on the lives of philanthropists, founders of religious orders and known Maltese personalities included that of Rev. Alfred Gatt (Dun Alfred) which enabled Rev. Alexander Bonnici to publish this biography in book form after Cardona's death.

Cardona also wrote plays, poems and poetic drama. In his poetry he showed great love and affection for the family and for God. Towards the end of his life, he showed a great desire to become a priest, but this desire was never accomplished.

Following the demise of Guze Cardona, his children decided that all his research, works and belongings would be left available for any subsequent studies. Following the family's vetting and indexing of all the documentation in their possession, in 2018, they donated his works to the National Archives in Rabat.

Fr. Hermann Duncan is a Carmelite Friar at the Carmelite Priory in Balluta.

