# DAĦLA EDITORJALI

Din is-sena l-Università ta' Malta qiegħda tfakkar għeluq l-erba' mitt sena mit-twaqqif tal-Collegium Melitense (1592 – 1992). Jixraq ħafna li s-sehem li jagħti d-Dipartiment tal-Malti fi ħdan l-Università f'din l-okkażjoni juri r-rabta bejnha u t-tagħlim tal-ilsien nazzjonali. Għalhekk il-*Journal of Maltese Studies* din id-darba hu ħarġa speċjali f'ġieħ l-ewwel għalliem tal-Malti fl-Università, Mikiel Anton Vassalli (1764 – 1829), illum magħruf minn kulħadd bħala Missier l-Ilsien Malti u meqjus bħala ħassieb u riformatur, daqskemm bħala ribell u studjuż li lemaħ fil-bogħod u sa minn kmieni l-qawmien għaqli tan-nazzjonalità Maltija, imsejsa qabelxejn fuq l-għarfien sħiħ tal-ilsien qadim tal-ġżira.

Matul iż-żmien l-interess fil-persunalità kumplessa ta' Vassalli kiber f'livelli differenti. Il-figura tiegħu saret l-oġġett ta' attenzjoni mhux biss akkademika iżda wkoll letterarja u politika. Mhux biss inkitbu bosta xogħlijiet ta' tiftix fundamentali dwaru bħala bniedem, ħassieb u studjuż, iżda hu nnifsu tbiddel f'persunaġġ letterarju kemm f'rumanzi, f'novelli, f'poeżiji u fi drammi. Il-klassi politika sikwit stħarrġitu fi dwal kuntrastanti ħafna, waqt li l-interess popolari fih kiber ukoll, l-aktar bis-saħħa ta' artikli ġurnalistiċi u b'kotra ta' programmi fuq ir-radju u t-televiżjoni.

Din il-ġabra hi maħsuba li tiġbor ix-xogħlijiet fundamentali dwar ix-xejriet differenti tal-persunalità tiegħu. Għadd ta' storiċi ssoktaw ifittxu t-tagħrif dwaru bħala bniedem, oħrajn stħarrġu l-aspetti tal-ħidma politika u kulturali tiegħu, oħrajn xeħtu dawl fuq il-qofol ta' ħsiebu fejn tixref il-viżjoni ta' nazzjon modern u ħieles. Bil-ħruġ ta' dan il-volum nittama li l-ispeċjalisti u l-pubbliku ġenerali, kif ukoll l-imseħbin kollha tal-*Journal of Maltese Studies* imxerrdin f'naħat differenti tad-dinja, fosthom studjużi eminenti barranin tal-ilsien Malti u l-kultura Maltija, ikollhom ġabra sħiħa kemm jista' jkun ta' kulma hu essenzjali f'Vassalli. B'xi eċċezzjoni, kulma hu miġbur f'din l-edizzjoni ġie ppubblikat diġà u baqa' mxerred 'l hawn u 'l hinn. Bil-ġbir ta' dan kollu f'edizzjoni waħda, nittama li tidher aħjar il-medda tat-tiftix xjentifiku li sar sa issa, kif ukoll il-medda ta' tiftix ieħor li jixraq li jissokta jsir f'dawn l-oqsma u f'oħrajn.


*Radd il-ħajr*

Radd il-ħajr lil Carmel G. Bonavia, li ħa ħsieb it-taqsima fotografika, fid-dawl ta' l-artikli, u lil Annabelle Falzon, Joseph Borg, Mark A. Falzon, Frans Sammut, Joseph Cortis għall-għajnuna tagħhom, kif ukoll lil George Vella, l-istampatur, u l-istaff tiegħu għall-kollaborazzjoni u l-effiċjenza li wrew fit-tħejjija ta' din il-ħarġa speċjali.


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# EDITORIAL NOTE

The University of Malta is this year celebrating the foundation of Collegium Melitense four centuries ago (1592–1992). Fittingly enough the Department of Maltese is marking the event by highlighting its ties with the national language of the island. A special edition of the *Journal of Maltese Studies* is dedicated to Mikiel Anton Vassalli (1764–1829), first to teach Maltese at the University. Vassalli is now widely acknowledged as the Father of the Maltese Language, a thinker, a reformer, as well as a rebel and an academic whose foresight envisaged the awakening of a nationalistic conscience underpinned by the full recognition of the mother tongue.

Interest in Vassalli, throughout the years, heightened at various levels. He was to capture the attention of politicians as well as scholars and personalities in the field of literature. Not only was Vassalli deeply researched as an outstanding figure, thinker and academic, but became variously the subject of novels, short stories, poems and plays. He proved a controversial figure to politicians who viewed him from several and different standpoints. Print, radio and TV journalists made him increasingly popular.

This special edition encapsulates his many aspects. Historians delved deeply into his life and times, others researched his political and cultural activities, and threw light on his basic thoughts, his vision of a future modern and sovereign state. The objective of this volume is to provide specialists, the public in general, and subscribers to the *Journal of Maltese Studies* at home and abroad a complete collection of all that is essentially noteworthy about Vassalli. With the exception of a few works, most material in this edition has already been published. I hope the publication of this material gathered in one edition will make it easier to appreciate the length and breath of the scientific research on Vassalli carried out to date. Much more,of course, needs to be done in the future.

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