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THE ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

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INTRODUCTION

We have extended the scope of this review by using it as a very useful means of enriching the University Library with similar exchange publications of other Commonwealth and Continental Universities. We intend to continue publishing it not only because it provides space for contributions from members of our Teaching Staff, especially those belonging to the Faculty of Arts, but also for contributions by scholars who, though they do not belong to our University and are not Maltese, yet have common interests at heart.

We read with great interest a letter by Professor C. Carrington in *The Times* of April 8, 1959, because it called our attention to an academic and social function that, with the co-operation of our Teaching Staff whose Association (*Atrum*) has already raised the matter with the University Commission, could be very adequately carried out by our University, the oldest in the British Commonwealth overseas. As pointed out by Professor Carrington writing *a propos* of a Mediterranean University 'there is already in the Mediterranean an ancient and respectable, but impoverished, University where the English Language is in use... the Royal University of Malta, which, by comparison with the new Colonial University Colleges, has been starved of Colonial Development and Welfare Funds. Malta is in the historic meeting place of several Mediterranean cultures. The Royal University is already associated with the general University organization of the Commonwealth... With British aid the Royal University might thus become an international centre for higher education throughout the Mediterranean, using the English language'.

Sometimes history moves forwards and backwards within a context of similar circumstances. Dr. Laferla in his book *British Malta* (p. 101) writing about early Nineteenth Century Malta says: 'At that time England had great dreams about Malta which, she hoped, would become "a place of Eminent Importance as the central point of a Great Commerce and the Seat of the English Influence in the Mediterranean...". It was also planned to make Gozo the seat of a "considerable University which would attract the young men of the most enterprising Greek and Italian families and become at the same time a new source of wealth to Malta and a lasting instrument for the extension of England's moral influence, throughout the Levant and south of Italy" '.

Our University so near the Continent and the Middle East can serve both Malta and the Commonwealth if the ideas of men of vision and foresight are given a chance to prove their value in the promotion of Anglo-Maltese influence in the Mediterranean.

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ALLEGORY IN THE AENEID[1]

By E. COLEIRO

The part played by allegory in some of Vergil's *Bucolics* is well known, even if there has been a certain amount of controversy about its interpretation. One thing we can certainly infer from the *Bucolics*, that allegory was dear to Vergil. In this essay some attempts are made to establish how far Vergil made use of allegory in the *Aeneid*.

Already before the close of the Classical Age the tradition of an allegorical interpretation of the Vergilian epic had taken shape. Witnesses of that are Donatus, Servius and Macrobius, in the fourth century. In particular, Donatus thought that Vergil in writing his poems followed an order similar to the development of man's life which is first pastoral, then agricultural and lastly warlike. Hence, the *Bucolics*, the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*[2]. Servius held that Vergil praises Augustus by exploiting the

[1] BIBLIOGRAPHY: The following works might be profitably consulted: Brignoli, F.M., 'La porta d'avorio', nel libro VI dell'*Eneide*, *Giornale Italiano di Filologia*, VII, 1954; Brooks, R.A., 'Discolor Aura. Reflections on the Golden Bough'. *American Journal of Philology*, LXXIV, 1953, 260-80; Comparetti, D., *Virgilio nel Medio Evo*, Firenze, 1937; Corfmacher, W.Ch., 'Vergil, spokesman for the Augustan reforms', *Classical Journal*, LI, 1956, 329-34; Crutwell, R.W., 'Vergil's mind at work', an analysis of the *Symbolism of the Aeneid*, Oxford, 1947; de Grassi, A., 'Vergil and the forum of Augustus', *Epigraphica*, VII, 1945, 88; Demimuied, *De Bernardo Carnotensi grammatico et Professore et Vergili interprete*, Paris, 1873; Donatus, Tiberius Claudius, *Commentary on the Aeneid*, ed. Reifferscheid, 1860; Drew, D.L., *The Allegory of the Aeneid*, Oxford, 1937; Fulgentius, Fabius Planciades, *Liber Expositione Virgilianae Continentiae*, ed. Bunte, Bremen, 1852; Gargiulo, C., *La religiosità di Virgilio nella figura di Enea*, Messina, 1950; Haarhoff, T.J., *The Gates of Sleep*, Greece & Rome, XVII, 1948, p. 89; Kerenyi, K., *The Golden Bough*, Hermes, 1931, 413; Mackay, L.A., 'Three levels in meaning in Aeneid VI', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, LXXXVI, 1955, 180-9; Macrobius, Ambrosius Aurelius Theodosius, *Saturnaliorum Conviviorum Libri* VII, books 3-6, ed. Eyssenhardt, Lips, 1868; Poeschl, V., *Die Dichtkunst Virgils. Bild und Symbolik in der Aeneis*, Wein, 1949; Rowell, H.T., 'Vergil and the Forum of Augustus', *American Journal of Philology*, 1939, 288; Sapojnikoff, V., 'Vergil's hero is the great Imperium Romanum', *Rev. Phil.*, 1932, 56; Servius, *Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in V. Carmina commentarii*, ed. G. Thilo and H. Hagen, 3 vols, 1881-7; Tenny, Frank, 'The pageant of heroes in Aeneid VI', *American Journal of Philology*, 1938, 227; Verral, M., 'Symbolism in Vergil', *The Classical Review*, March, 1910, Ward, Fowler, *Gathering of The Clans* 1915; Woodworth, D.C., 'The marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia', in *Transactions and Proceeding of the American Association*, 1930, 175 sqq.

[2] Cfr Servius, prooem, eclog.

achievements and works of Aeneas. In the Middle Ages the allegorical interpretation of the poem reached absurd proportions. Fulgentius, who wrote in the fifth or sixth century, in his *De Continentia Vergiliana*, builds up a most detailed allegorical picture interpreting each book in terms of the stages of man's life on earth.[3] Bernard of Chartres in his commentary to the first six books of the *Aeneid* holds that Vergil describes the fortunes of human life and what the soul does as long as it is temporarily enclosed in the body.[4] John of Salisbury considers the *Aeneid* as an allegory of all philosophical truth, and, like Fulgentius, considers the first six books of the *Aeneid* as an allegory of the vicissitudes of human life from infancy to old age.[5]

Some scholars in our own times have revived the allegorical theory and have tried to detect symbolical interpretations in certain parts or passages of the *Aeneid*. But some of these interpretations read rather like guesswork and are hardly corroborated by any internal or external evidence. Others command more serious attention.

The allegory of the *Aeneid* is more subtle than that of the *Bucolics*, because it is less direct and, therefore, less apparent. In its broad lines it is consequent on the very purpose of the poem. Although Vergil had toyed with the idea of writing an epic since his young days when he was writing the *Bucolics*,[6] the actual suggestion to write the poem which we have came from higher quarters.[7] When Octavian definitely brought the whole Roman Empire under his rule after the battle of Actium, he meant to make his position as durable as he could make it. In Julius Caesar the idea of absolute autocracy, possibly of a monarchical shape, took some time to develop. But Octavian had the experiences of his grand-uncle to lead him, and from the very start he decided on a monarchy: a hereditary monarchy which, if it was not to be surrounded with the brilliance of an oriental court, was still to be no less absolute in its powers. Its support was to be two-fold: a strong and centralized army and popular favour. One of the means by which this popular favour was to be secured was propaganda. In this sense Octavian was perhaps a fore-runner of our own contemporary age. With that in view he gathered around him, through the agency of his home-minister Maecenas, most of the writers of the age, protected them, made them financially secure by bestowing land upon them, thus making sure that not only they would write nothing that ran counter to his auto-

[3] Cfr Comparetti I, 147 sqq., 135 sqq.; Van Staveren, 'De Continentia', in *Mythographi latini*, Ludg. Bat. 1742.
[4] Cfr Cousin, Ourag. inéd. d'Abelard, p. 283 sqq.
[5] Polycratic, VI. c. 22 (Migne 199, 621), and Polycratic II, c. 15 (Migne, 199, 430).
[6] Cfr Georg. III, 12-39, and ibid. 46-7.
[7] Cfr Servius, p. 70, 26 Br., *Postea ab Augusto Aeneidem propositam scripsit.*

cracy but also that they would positively support his policy whenever that was needed. Thus Horace wrote the first six odes of the third book, the so-called Roman odes, to foster the civic virtues which Augustus was trying to bring back to Roman life after the moral collapse of the last years of the republic; he wrote the fourth book of the odes almost as an afterthought, to enhance the prestige of the Emperor's adopted sons, and possibly, the rulers-designate of the Empire, after their victories in Southern Germany. The *Georgics* of Vergil were the result of a suggestion by Maecenas that a poem should be written endorsing and helping Augustus's policy of calling the Italians back to the land after the devastations of the long civil wars during which much of the once fruitful land of Italy had been deprived of cultivators and left derelict and abandoned.[8]

The Aeneid, I repeat, was also the result of a similar suggestion by the ruling powers. True to his propaganda drive to prop up his infant throne, Octavian wanted to idealize his person and his work. The very title of *Augustus*, assumed by a decree of the senate in 27, a title which really defies exact analysis, and which was meant to shed around Octavian an aureola of a higher greatness which not only distinguished him from Octavian the triumvir and the military despot, but commended him to gods as well as men, indicates that he wanted to appear in the eyes of his subjects as the god-sent, the one about whom the gods had planned a special providence, one who had become something almost bordering on the divine. Hence the divine cult which Augustus organized for his person throughout Italy and the Empire.

The help of the poet who had already helped so ably the agricultural policy of the regime by his stupendous *Georgics* would have an incalculable propaganda value. Hence the *Aeneid*, which, in this sense, may well be considered in the nature of a political pamphlet.

The person of Augustus and the Rome of Augustus were to be presented to Rome, to Italy and to the Empire in the idealized light of poetry which would capture the imagination of the multitude and make of the heroes (Augustus and Rome) household names of national import. The subject was not an easy one: it has never been easy to turn contemporary politics into poetry, and we know that it took Vergil some time to find an appropriate background on which to build his theme. Augustus, in spite of his titles and his present work for Rome, in spite of the *pax augustea* he had ultimately achieved, was still for many, indeed for the thinking many of Rome, the Octavian who in 43 had used to his own private advantage the legions given to him by the senate, allying himself with Mark Antony, the arch-enemy of the senate; he was still the triumvir who had signed the

[8] Cfr Georg. III, 41.

wholesale political proscriptions which followed and which sent to their doom hundreds who, like Cicero, had merited well of the republic; he was still the Octavian who had filled the senate with his own nominees, rendered the magistracies a mere shadow, monopolised the military machine of the whole Empire, and set up the strictest military autocracy the Roman people had ever experienced. That, of course, besides the personal short-comings, both of a private and public order, which were well known to both friends and foes. At Philippi, where he was fighting against Brutus and Cassius, his own wing had been worsted and it was Antony's generalship that had secured the final victory over the enemy. His ultimate victory over Sextius Pompeius and his defeat of Antony at Actium were all due to the brilliant generalship of his admiral Agrippa, not to mention other instances. Hence it was rather difficult to turn the blood-stained hands of the scheming, hypocritical, autocratic Octavian into the pious hands that must achieve the god-planned victories of an epic poem of national import. But if Augustus could hardly be idealized in flesh and blood, that process might be achieved through a symbol, and Vergil wisely went back to a legendary and half-mythical age and therefrom chose a personality on which he might work as a symbol of the real Augustus, so that the halo of semi-divine greatness proper to the symbol might enhance, as required, the prestige of Augustus by overshadowing him with the resulting majesty which the brilliant colours of the symbol engendered.

The subtle meaning of the *Aeneid*, therefore, is that of an allegory borrowing colours from a distant imaginary past and bearing on the present with an almost mystical suggestiveness. As Augustus had rescued the Roman people from the blood-stained wreckage of the fifty years of civil strife and warfare and had guaranteed a new lease of life to Rome by the establishment of the imperial autocracy, thus making it possible that after the irrevocable extinction of the republic Rome should continue with its mission for civilization and order, so Aeneas, of whom Augustus is a direct descendant, leads his people from the wreckage of Troy after the irrevocable fall of the city to a new lease of life by founding for them a new city which will guarantee the perpetuation of the Trojans' work, namely, that of giving rise, in conjunction with the native Latins, to the great glory that was to be Rome. As Augustus is linked with Aeneas by the material ties of blood and kinship and by the moral ones of leadership, so Rome is linked up with Troy by the material transportation from one city to the other of Troy's *penates* and Troy's sacred fire, as related in Book II, and the pre-eminence of Troy in the East, materially shown both by the stand against the united effort of the whole of Greece for ten years, and by the fact that it merited to be sung by the greatest poet of

antiquity, Homer, is balanced by the pre-eminence of Rome in the ages to come in Italy, in the Mediterranean and in the whole civilized world.

This link between Aeneas and Augustus may be seen in various ways.

In Book VIII, while both sides, Trojans and Latins, are preparing for the coming clash, Venus gets from Vulcan for Aeneas a suit of armour the most conspicuous part of which is a shield embossed with pictures (panels) representing the milestones of future Roman greatness. As the shield is to be the sure protection of Aeneas against his foe, so it represents the greatness of Roman history towards which the safety of Aeneas is directed:

> Illic res Italas Romanorumque triumphos,
> haud vatum ignarus venturique inscius aevi,
> fecerat Ignipotens; (VIII, 626)

and later Aeneas, having on his shoulder this shield, is unknowingly carrying the whole fame and fate of his glorious descendants:

> attollens umero famamque et fata nepotum. (VIII, 731)

It contained, on one side, a picture of the wolf nursing Romulus and Remus, next, the rape of the Sabine women, the corpse of Mettius of Alba drawn by Tullus Hostilius, Porsenna besieging Rome with Horatius defending the bridge and Cloelia escaping, Manlius defending the Capitol, the Salii and the Luperci dancing at the sacrifice, Catiline going into Tartarus, and Cato acting as the judge of the departed. All these panels are embossed around a scene which occupies the centre of the shield and which depicts in four parts the victory of Actium and the triumph of Augustus after it. On one side there is depicted the actual battle, with Augustus directing his troops from his flagship, accompanied by the senate, the people, the penates and the great gods of Rome; next to it is represented the battle between the Egyptian and Roman gods; and on the other side the flight of Cleopatra and the triumph of Augustus. This triumph is dwelt upon in great detail:

> at Caesar, triplici invectus Romana triumpho
> moenia, dis Italis, votum inmortale, sacrabat,
> maxuma ter centum totam delubra per Urbem.
> laetitia ludisque viae plausuque fremebant;
> omnibus in templis matrum chorus, omnibus arae;
> ante aras terram caesi stravere iuvenci.
> ipse sedens niveo candentis limine Phoebi
> dona recognoscit populorum aptatque superbis
> postibus; incedunt victae longo ordine gentes,

quam variae linguis, habitu tam vestis et armis.
hic Nomandum genus et discinctos Mulciber Afros,
hic Lelegas Carasque sagittiferosque Gelonos
finxerat; Euphrates ibat iam mollior undis;
extremique hominum Morini, Rhenusque bicornis;
indomitique Dahae et pontem indignatus Araxes. (VIII, 714)

The central position occupied by the group of four pictures dealing with the battle of Actium and its consequent triumph makes it clear that Augustus is considered as the core towards which is directed the whole course of Roman history fashioned by the achievements of so many great Romans. All these, and especially Augustus, are descendants of Aeneas:

famamque et fata nepotum

The decisive victory of Actium made Octavian supreme and is definitely the culmination of the events which led to the establishment of the Empire under Augustus.

The burning flame which appears on the head of Julius in Book II, 683 and the star which in the same portent flashes across the sky (ib. 694) are the same Julian star which is depicted on the forehead of Augustus in Vulcan's shield, thereby showing that Augustus is the one among Aeneas's descendants who shall one day fulfil the destiny set in motion by Aeneas in bringing the Trojans to Italy and in thus being responsible, through Julius and the Alban kings, for the foundation of Rome.

On his return from the victory of Actium Augustus built, in honour of Apollo and in fulfilment of a vow made during the battle, a magnificent temple on the Palatine and reinstated the Ludi Apollinares which, first celebrated at the time of the battle of Cannae, had fallen into disuse. Augustus also celebrated in honour of Apollo and Diana the Ludi Saeculares. In the temple of Apollo on the Palatine he placed the revised edition of the Sybilline oracles and set up a new college of priests to keep them in custody and interpret them.

Now, all that is poetically imagined by Vergil to be done in fulfilment of a vow made by Aeneas to the Sybil in Book VI. In the beginning of Book VI, where Aeneas goes to the Sybil and asks her to unfold to him his future, known to her by her prophetic powers, he promises in return to build to the god of prophecy, her inspirer, a temple, to institute new games in his honour and to set up in her particular honour a new college of priests:

tum Phoebo et Triviae solido de marmore templum
instituam, festosque dies de nomine Phoebi.
te quoque magna manent regnis penetralia nostris;

hic ego namque tuas sortes arcanaque fata,
dicta meae genti, ponam lectosque sacrabo,
alma, viros. (VI, 69)

That promise Aeneas fulfils in the person of his descendant Augustus.

The deification of Augustus is foreshadowed in the promise of deification which is repeatedly made to Aeneas in the poem. Thus in the promise of Jove to Venus in I, 259:

sublimemque feres ad sidera caeli
magnanimum Aenean.

So also in VI, 789:

hic Caesar, et omnis Iuli
progenies, magnum caeli ventura sub axem;

and in XII, 794:

indigetem Aenean scis ipsa, et scire fateris,
deberi caelo, fatisque ad sidera tolli.

The drive made by Augustus to reinstate morals and religion in Rome is well known. The collapse of private and public morality in the last hundred years of the republic, which Sallust depicts so vividly in the introductory paragraphs to his *Catilinarian War*, made any new social order impossible, and Augustus saw clearly that any new fabric had to have in the first instance a sound moral basis. Hence his social legislation to foster marriage, to combat childless marriages, to punish adultery, and the example he himself set of putting his own house in order, punishing by exile his own and only daughter Julia and his grand-daughter, Julia the second. Hence also his drive to renovate the state religion, to revive the *pax deorum* of an earlier age and to re-establish the former serene belief in the state-protecting deities of Rome. Hence his systematic repair of disused temples, which he undertook in 20 B.C.; his resuscitation of many half-forgotten ceremonies; his careful supervision of the worship of Vesta; his revival of the cult of Dea Dia by the obsolescent college of the Arval Brotherhood; his reappointment of a flamen Dialis; and his celebration of the Ludi Saeculares.

Now, that drive for religion is foreshadowed in the *pietas* of Aeneas. Vergil repeatedly reminds us that his hero is *pius*, 'pius Aeneas.' In Book II when the penates of Troy are to be rescued from the conflagration of the city, they are consigned by the ghost of Hector to Aeneas who is told that he is to be their custodian until he can build a new city for them.

He leaves Troy, gathers the Trojan refugees at Anthandros and leads them through the perils of a long sea journey in search of a distant new home in pursuance of a mission imposed upon him by the gods. It is the gods he continually consults, at Delphi, at the famous oracle, in Crete in his dream, in Chaonia through the prophet Helenus, at Cumae through the Sybil. In obedience to the gods' commands he gives up a comfortable home at Eryx in Sicily (where, in Book V, he is invited to stay by King Acestes) and a princely welcome by Dido in Carthage. His prayers to the oracle at Delphi (Book III) and to the Sybil of Cumae (Book VI) reveal his intensely religious mind.

Parallel to his piety towards the gods is Aeneas's piety towards his fatherland, his father Anchises, his son Julus, and his people. It is to find a new home for his people and thereby to renew, as it were, his fatherland that he goes through so much toil:

> multum ille et terris iactatus ab alto
> vi superum, saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram,
> multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem
> inferretque deos Latio, genus unde Latinum
> Albanique patres atque altae moenia Romae. (I, 3)

> multosque per annos
> errabant acti fatis maria omnia circum,
> Tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem. (I, 31)

> magnas obeuntia terras
> tot maria intravi duce te penitusque repostas
> Massylum gentes, praetentaque Syrtibus arva. (VI, 58)

It is to establish this new home for Julus and his people that he has to fight a stiff war on his landing in Italy. So the Sybil foretells:

> Bella, horrida bella,
> et Thybrim multo spumantem sanguine cerno.
> non Simois tibi nec Xanthus nec Dorica castra
> defuerint; alius Latio iam partus Achilles,
> natus et ipse dea; nec Teucris addita Iuno
> usquam aberit. (VI, 86)

His father Anchises along with his son Julus he carries through the conflagration of Troy to safety: as long as Anchises lives it is his advice that Aeneas continually seeks; in Book V he celebrates funeral games in his honour, and in Book VI he goes through the harrowing experience of going down to the underworld to visit his father.

Aeneas's prowess in war, amply shown in Book II, in the night of the fall of Troy, and in Books X, XI and XII in the fighting against the Latins and Turnus, foreshadows the martial qualities which Augustus expected the Empire to see in him. The leadership of Aeneas of his people has its counterpart in Augustus's imperial leadership of Rome. It is hardly an overstatement to assert that the whole of Roman history centres around Augustus. The republic which Cicero tried hard to save was beyond remedy. The attempts to patch up the old republican institutions had all ended in civil strife and political chaos. It was Augustus who, with his strong but gentle autocracy, reinstated the authority of a central administration and made it possible for Rome's *imperium* to continue to dominate over Western Europe and the shores of the Mediterranean for full five hundred years. He set his mark on Rome's army; he definitely stabilized the frontiers on the Rhine, the Danube, the Euphrates, and the Sahara; he re-shaped Rome's civil administration; he covered Rome with the splendour of marble and gold; he embarked upon and finished many ambitious schemes of public works throughout Italy; he created an efficient civil service which could control and protect life and property not only in Rome but throughout the whole Empire; and he inspired in a new and very thorough manner Rome's verse and prose writers, so that his very name overshadowed his age and gave it a new meaning.

All this we find suggested in the latter half of Book VI. As in the shield of Aeneas Augustus occupies the central and the most prominent part, so here, in Book VI, in the review of Rome's future heroes, Augustus's personality stands quite apart and towers above all the others with his mighty personality and far-preaching achievements:

> Hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis,
> Augustus Caesar, Divi genus, aurea condet
> saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva
> Saturno quondam. (VI, 791)

Rome itself with its history and its great Mission among the nations has its great share of the symbolism of the *Aeneid*. Its universal rule and civilizing mission is clearly forecast in Book VI, 851:

> tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento —
> haec tibi erunt artes — pacique imponere morem,
> parcere subiectis et debellare superbos. (VI, 851)

But, in addition to that, particular parts of the *Aeneid* recall special instances of Roman history, giving in that way to the book itself a special national significance of its own. Book IV is certainly episodic in character,

for the events related in it have hardly any repercussion on the course of Aeneas's doings: they only introduce a romantic element of Alexandrine type which in the mighty hands of Vergil becomes one of the best pages of the literature of all time. But Dido's story is not just that. There is hardly any doubt that the story of Dido as a whole is symbolical. I do not endorse the opinion of those who see in Dido a symbol of Cleopatra.[9] Dido's genuine love for Aeneas and her pangs at his desertion can hardly stand for the wiles of the Egyptian queen who tried her arts with varied success on Caesar and Antony first and then, with failure, on Augustus. The unmistakeable sympathy of Vergil for the Carthaginian queen could hardly be his feelings for the Egyptian seducer. Dido's prayer in Book IV, 622 sqq. rather links up her story with one of the most crucial and decisive episodes of Rome's history. As in the Punic Wars, and particularly in the second one, Rome's advance towards Mediterranean and world domination was very nearly cut short by Hannibal's Carthage, and it needed all the strength of Rome's character and resources to weather the storm and save Rome's civilizing influence for all time, so Aeneas's course towards Italy where he is destined to give rise to the greatness for which Rome stands runs a very serious danger of being cut short by his stay in Carthage and his marriage with Dido; and Aeneas needs all his strength of character to shake himself off from the ties which would have absorbed his Trojans into the Carthaginian people and city. The intimate relation between the episode of Dido and the Carthaginian Wars is clearly indicated in the lines in which Vergil makes these wars the result of the curse of the dying Dido:

> Tum vos, o Tyrii, stirpem et genus omne futurum
> exercete odiis, cinerique haec mittite nostro
> munera. nullus amor populis, nec foedera sunto.
> exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor,
> qui face Dardanios ferroque sequare colonos,
> nunc, olim, quocumque dabunt se tempore vires.
> litora litoribus contraria, fluctibus undas,
> imprecor, arma armis; pugnent ipsique nepotesque. (IV, 622)

The welcome extended to Aeneas and his Trojans in Book V by King Acestes as well as the settlement left behind by Aeneas at Acesta (later Segesta) and the temple built also by Aeneas in honour of Venus on Mount Eryx are symbolical of the friendship of the city of Eryx with Rome in the First Punic War and of the favourable terms of alliance which the Romans gave to the city of Segesta in 263 B.C.

[9] Cfr later, D. L. Drew, Note 16.

The second part of the poem in its general motive recalls the first part of the history of the Republic. When the kings were driven out the republic had to fight, first for its very existence against the Etruscans of Porsenna, and afterwards against the Latin League. After the battle of Lake Regillus the period of consolidation was over and Rome little by little started on its career of conquest, fighting practically continuous wars against the Latins, Volsci, Rutuli, Marsi, Equi. After the conquest of Latium Rome's attention was turned to Etruria, and when that part of Italy was annexed, there followed the conquest of Samnium in three long wars, until the whole of the peninsula fell under the hegemony of Rome. The only allies which Rome, at times, found in this continuous war of conquest were the Greek cities of Campania. The result of this conquest was not the extermination of the conquered Italians but their incorporation in a huge federation, mostly in the way of *amici et socii*. This integration of all these peoples, some of them, like the Oscans and Greeks of the South, of different ethnical character from the Latins, became so complete that by the end of the republic the Italians were sharing on a completely equal footing the benefits of Rome's victories abroad and the glamour of Rome's honours at home in the administration of the capital. In the last half century of the republic Marius and Cicero coming from the Volscian town of Arpinum, Pompey from Picenum, Catullus and Vergil from Cisalpine Gaul, felt that they were as Roman as Caesar or Brutus who were natives of the capital.

Now the alignment of forces for or against Aeneas in the last six books of the *Aeneid* reflects all that. While the allies of Aeneas are the Greeks of Evander, the coalition against him represents, broadly, the peoples Rome had to fight against first to assert and to consolidate itself as a republic and then to bring a unified and federated Italy under her rule: Turnus represents the Rutuli; Catilus and Coras come from Tibur; Caeculus comes with the forces of Praeneste, Gabii, and of the Hernici; Ufens, with the Aequiculi of Latium; Clausus, with the Sabines; Umbo represents the Marsi; Camilla, the Volsci; Mezentius, the Etruscans; and Halaesus, the Samnites and Oscans.

All these in vain do their best to frustrate what Aeneas had set out to achieve, as all these peoples, each in their own time and circumstances, had in vain tried to stem the advance of Rome. But, reading the battle books in the latter part of the *Aeneid*, especially Books X and XI, one feels that Vergil is all the time in full sympathy with the Italian heroes who valiantly struggle in vain against the Trojans. Their valour gets its due meed of praise, and although the heroes themselves are vanquished their prowess is fully recognized. This is particularly the case of Turnus

In the attack on the Trojan camp in Book IX Turnus wreaks as much slaughter as ever Aeneas does, and in the single combat with Aeneas in Book XII one feels that he is doomed not because he is inferior to Aeneas but because so the gods decreed, to make it possible for Aeneas to achieve the purpose for which he had come from Troy to Italy. It is clear that Vergil wants to give the impression that once the war is over and once the Trojans will have joined themselves as one people with their former foes they will go hand in hand to ensure the national destiny which awaits jointly Rome and the romanized peoples of Italy in their conquest of the Mediterranean.

The victory of Aeneas will not have as its result the extermination of the conquered but only a federation of conquerors and conquered, on a perfectly equal footing, for the achievement of a common destiny. These are the very words of Aeneas in Book XII, 187:

> sin nostrum adnuerit nobis Victoria Martem, –
> ut potius reor, et potius di numine firment –
> non ego nec Teucris Italos parere iubebo,
> nec mihi regna peto; paribus se legibus ambae
> invictae gentes aeterna in foedera mittant,

And, further on, in the same book, in line 827, Juno's prayer, granted by Jove, is:

> sit Romana potens Itala virtute propago.

Another point where a symbol might be sought is the veneration in which a number of places on or around the Palatine or the Aventine are held by Evander. When in Book VIII Evander welcomes Aeneas and his group of Trojans he first invites them to partake in the festival which they are celebrating in honour of Hercules near the cave of the Lupercal; and afterwards he takes them to see a number of places which he and his people hold in particular veneration. Now these very places, almost hallowed by ancient legendary associations, were held in particular veneration in Rome in Augustus's own day. One feels that the veneration in which they are held by Evander is symbolical of the veneration in which they were held by the Roman people in Vergil's own time. The very festival which Evander was holding in honour of Hercules when the Trojans arrived (Book VII) should symbolize the cult with which the Romans honoured that god in their two temples, the one in the Forum Boarium (between the Circus Maximus and the Tiber) and the other near the Porta Trigemina (on the Tiber, further on towards the Aventine).

Evander shows Aeneas the Ara Carmentalis and near it the Porta Carmen-

talis between the Capitol and the Tiber, so called after the nymph Carmentalis, mother of Evander. This nymph was supposed to have prophesied the glorious future of Aeneas's descendants. Next he shows him the grove on the Capitol which according to the legend Romulus later on turned into an asylum for runaways from the neighbouring towns who wished to settle in Rome. In the time of Augustus the grove was still there and still retained its hallowed associations through its neighbouring temple of Jupiter Capitolinus and that of Juno. At the foot of the Palatine there was the Lupercal or grotto where the she-wolf is supposed to have nursed the baby twins Romulus and Remus. It was the centre of a great celebration held on the 15th of February in historical times. Then Evander shows him the Argiletum, a place between the Capitol and the Avetine where Evander is supposed to have buried Argillus, a guest from Argos. He shows him the Tarpeian rock of which Evander's people even then feel scared, and the Capitol which is thought to be already hallowed by the presence of the divinity of the supreme god, thereby symbolizing the selection of the Capitol by the Romans for the building of their principal temple, namely, that of Jupiter Capitolinus.

The historical associations, then, and the religious veneration in which Vergil makes these places to be held by Evander and his people are a symbol of the historical or religious associations attributed to these same places in Vergil's own day.

The unity of the Empire under Augustus is symbolized by the fact that, as we are told in Book III, in their journey the Trojans leave behind them, in some places which they visit, Trojan settlements. Thus they leave a settlement in Thrace, another in Crete, and yet another at Eryx in Sicily. The very names given to places on the Italian coast after deceased companions of Aeneas, such as the promontories of Palinurus, Misenus, and Caieta, serve to stress the link that the South of Italy has with Aeneas and hence with Rome and to symbolize the intimate national union which, effected as a result of the Social War, was at the time of Augustus a reality. In this sense the *Aeneid* was meant to be a national poem with an appeal not only to Rome but to the whole of Italy: the intimate association of these places with the voyage of Aeneas should symbolize this broad nationalism.

Some of the points made by scholars of our own time call for a special mention. Some are ingenious enough but their lack of internal or external proof hardly compels assent. Such is Woodworth's suggestion[10] that the

[10] Cfr Bibliography Note I.

marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia has a dynastic significance connected with the marriage of Augustus. Such is the symbolism which M. Verral[10] thinks she sees in VI, 14-33 and VI, 707-9. Such also is R.A. Brook's opinion[10] that the golden bough of Book VI is a symbol of death in life. Not much different is the position of C. Gargiulo,[10] who sees in the pietas of Aeneas a symbol of the piety of Vergil himself; and of Tenny Frank[10] who thinks that Vergil's pageant of heroes in Book VI was inspired by the same enthusiasm as led Augustus to create a portrait gallery of ancient worthies in the Forum.

Particularly remarkable are the points which D.L. Drew[10] makes. Some of them, it is true, may be somewhat far-fetched, but others seem quite appropriate. He seems to be working mostly on his imagination when he considers the storm in Book I as a parallel to the naval disasters suffered by Augustus near Sicily, through defeat and storm, in 38-36 B.C.;[11] or when he considers the behaviour of Aeneas in the slaughter of Book II as a symbol of the revengeful conduct of Octavian after the murder of Julius Caesar (44-39 B.C.);[12] or when he takes the revolt of the women in Book V as an allegory of the revolt of the veterans in 30 B.C.,[13] or when he considers the visions of Aeneas, and particularly the one of Tiberinus in Book VIII, as symbolizing those which Augustus, according to Dio Cassius (53, 20) had the night after he was given the title of Augustus;[14] or when the visit of Aeneas and Achates to the Sybil in Book III is taken to symbolize the visit which Augustus and Agrippa made to the mathematician Theogenis of Apollonia.[15]

Again, one feels that while the parallelism between Aeneas and Augustus is to admitted, it is too much to see a Roman counterpart of the Age of Augustus in all the secondary heroes of the *Aeneid*, making Achates the symbol of Agrippa, Mnaestheus of Maecenas, Turnus of Antony, Mezentius of Sextus Pompeius, Lavinia of Drusilla, Dido of Cleopatra or Scribonia.[16] Of the Dido-Cleopatra allegory we have already spoken. Preposterous, indeed, is the contention that the main object of Book IV is to illustrate a besetting weakness of Augustus, his amourousness, and at the same time to illustrate the strength of mind shown by the emperor in overcoming that weakness at the call of public duty.[17]

[10] Cfr. Bibliography Note I.
[11] D.L. Drew, pp. 67 sqq.
[12] Ibid. pp. 62 sqq.
[13] Ibid. p. 73
[14] Ibid. p. 60 and p. 80
[15] Ibid. p. 87
[16] Ibid. pp. 83-9
[17] Ibid. p. 83

On the other hand, it is hard to reject the allegory Drew notices in Books V and VIII. In Book V the ritual followed by Aeneas (77-80) in paying observance to Anchises's shades would reproduce the custom of the Roman Parentalia-Feralia held in February 13-21. The arrow which is shot by Acestes and which bursts into flame and vanishes like a comet in the sky (522-8) may well symbolize the comet which appeared in 44 B.C. (July 20-30) when Octavian was holding games in honour of Julius Caesar. Aeneas pays the annual homage to his parent's Manes as Augustus pays the annual homage to his adoptive father, Julius Caesar, on July 12; and the games themselves, as described in Book V have a number of points of similarity with those celebrated by Augustus in 29 B.C.[18]

So also in Book VIII. It is hard to resist the assent that the rite in honour of Hercules is a symbol of the sacrifice performed in honour of Hercules Magnus Custos at the Ara Maxima in Augustus's own time.[19] Again, the arrival of Aeneas outside the walls of Evander's city on the 12th August, i.e. after having received at Cumae a sure sign of his fated call to empire, and when Arcas was celebrating the rites of Hercules (102-4), reads certainly like an allegory of Augustus's arrival at Rome from Naples to celebrate his triple triumph in 29 B.C. Augustus was outside the walls of Rome on August 12, and while staying at Naples he had visited Capreas and there he had been heartened by a 'sign'.[20] Similarly, Aeneas receives the shield of Vulcan as Augustus received in January 27 B.C. the golden *clupeus* which was placed in the Curia Julia.[21] The four groups of scenes on the shield (628-34; 635-41; 642-51; 652-70) correspond to the four virtues of Augustus, i.e. *virtus, clementia, iustitia, pietas,* and, at the same time, they portray the history of Rome as a progress of valour, clemency, justice and piety.[22]

It is impossible to do justice, here, to R.W. Crutwell. We may just state that some of the symbolism he detects like that resulting from the powerful emotive links between Bovillae and Julus, and Almo and Cybele; that contained in the Dolphin passage; like the parallelism between Aeneas and Hercules; the parallelism between Aeneas's visit to the underworld and that of Theseus through the Labyrinth; like the parallelism resulting from the references to Vulcan and Vesta in Book II, is rather convincing. But then the whole book, based as it is on the axial symbolism between Troy and Rome, commands attention and should be read in its entirety.

[18] Ibid. pp. 43 sqq.
[19] Ibid. p. 11.
[20] Ibid. p. 13.
[21] Ibid. p. 25 sqq.
[22] Ibid. pp. 27 sqq.

So, one feels that the *Aeneid* is, broadly, an allegory. Under the superficial description of the toil of the Trojans to settle in Latium and the personality and achievements of Aeneas lies a deeper significance in terms of the foundation of the Republic and of the new lease of life which the tottering Republic received from Augustus by the mighty experiment of his imperial autocracy. In this sense, the name of *Gesta populi Romani* by which the *Aeneid* may have also been known, in the first instance, in ancient times[23] does not seem to be inappropriate to the full significance of the poem.

[23] Cfr Servius ad Aen. VI, 752, 'unde etiam in antiquis invenimus opus hoc appellatum esse non *Aeneidem* sed *Gesta populi Romani,* quod ideo mutatum est quia nomen non a parte sed a toto debet dari.'

POETRY AND INSPIRATION

Lecture delivered in the British Institute of Valletta, in 1954

By J. AQUILINA

BEFORE I discuss the nature of poetry and the motive force behind it which we call 'inspiration', I beg you to enter with me the Poet's workshop where we can have a good look at his tools, which, when employed by him effectively in the odd moments of inspiration, create beauty of sound and feeling out of a fluid combination of verbal measures. The most important material on which the poet employs his sharpened tools is language, his own language that provides thousands of single words and word-combinations out of which he builds a significant poem for those that wish to escape from the drabness of daily life or enjoy vicariously thoughts and ideas that flashed through his mind but which they could not, and perhaps would not, express in appropriate language. Think of a few famous poems in English literature or in any other literature; try to recollect how the poems that are your favourites stand highest in your esteem precisely because, like amulets, they exercise a magical power on your imagination. Such are memorable poems that meet you half way by giving you the poet's own inspired power which awakens your own long pent-up emotions at the sight of something moving, exciting, something impressive, something the beauty of which lies far deeper down than the surface that carries the bare external lines of harmony, a young woman's face, for instance, joyous or mourning, a painted vase, sunset on your native hills, a blaze of morning fire spreading across the east or the west preceding sunrise or sunset with their manifold associations. Think of these poems and others nearer your heart and consider this: you have loved these poems because they met you half way. One day the sight of unexpected beauty in some form or other awoke emotions in your heart, set in motion disturbing associations, but when you attempted to translate such emotions into articulate language you felt helplessly inarticulate till you read your favourite poem that was a revelation of the inexpressible. Your favourite poems are your own soul's translations, your interpreters. Having made this wonderful discovery, you can now settle down comfortably in your armchair, read your favourite poem aloud to yourself and share the poet's vision to your heart's content. The poet has made you a present of a clear mirror to hold up to your own soul. He has helped you to discover your real self and to enjoy a language that is far beyond your verbal power of evocation.

Remember we are still in the Poet's workshop and that we are going to have a good look at his many tools. We are going to do so not out of idle curiosity but to know more about the real nature of poetic inspiration and the Poet's craft. Sometimes we shall have to be analytical though this approach is in itself deadly to the soul that animates the body of Poetry. But it is the best method to form a clear idea of the relation between Form and Content, between Soul and Body. Language, as I have told you, is the foremost tool in the Poet's workshop. But language is a tool common to all writers, good, bad and indifferent who employ it for a variety of reasons, some literary and some non-literary. Naturally, the poet treats language according to the technique of his craft.

Yes, the poet has his own craft; his own method as how to fashion rhythms and verses acceptable to the trained ear. That craft has its own set of rules, once more or less hard and fast, now hardly so. I am speaking of the rules of Prosody. The etymology of this word from Greek προσῳδία indicates the function of its rules. In Greek προσῳδία means a song sung to an instrument. Hence prosody consists of a set of laws that govern verbal harmony of metres.

Every language being made up of words that are in their turn made up of musical units has its own metrical laws. Those familiar with the Latin prosody and the prosody of languages that are largely vocalic like Italian and Spanish or the prosody of largely consonantal languages like English and German and Arabic know what I mean. Every language has its own native verbal rhythms and this accounts for the variety of prosodies. But though the prosodies of the different languages may differ, as they do indeed in many respects, they have this in common: they all work out musical patterns which in combination create harmonious metres in tune with the genius of the language. The paths are different but they all lead to Music; and music is the meeting-place of all great poetry. The different paths by themselves hardly make a substantial difference, the ultimate destination being the same. For it is music, verbal music, that disciplines all poetry on a common scale of *rhythm* which is the common denominator of all prosodies. Rhythm, therefore, is the primary factor of verbal music which, by its very nature, is common to all poetry in any language. Being of primary value, it is therefore more important in verse composition than rhyme; and, as you know, many a great poet dispensed with it altogether. Now *Rhythm*, is 'metrical movement determined by various relations of long and short accented and unaccented syllables, measured flow of words and phrases in verse or prose'. In music it is the 'systematic grouping of notes according to duration and structure resulting from this'. This comprehensive definition which I have taken from the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*

includes all the elements that in combination produce *rhythm*. If you study carefully the reason why these formative elements produce 'verbal music', you will note that in the combination they produce a sequence of notes based on numbers. Number, as you know, was placed by Pythagoras at the very foundation of all harmony, physical and intellectual.

The Pythagorean school of thought which influenced that of Socrates and Plato, true to the principle of the Master, taught that the basis of geometry, astronomy, and music was harmony and proportion both reducible to number which for them assumed 'a mystical significance'. The right number of stresses and unstresses according to the numbers of places into which they fit naturally produce the 'verbal music', that makes poetry pleasant to the ears. The semantics of Latin *numerus* throws light on the classical concept of 'number' as an element of harmony in the sense I have been explaining. In Latin *numerus* indicated 'a musical measure, time, rhythm of motion or sound, harmony, numbers. Measures or metrical foot', and the adjective *numerosus* meant accordingly also 'measured, harmonious, melodious'. Cicero defined this adjective thus: *numerosum est id in omnibus sonis atque vocibus, quod habet quasdam impressiones et quod metiri possumus intervallis aequalibus* (Cicero de *Or.* 3.48). Therefore prosody is a matter of counting syllables, and measuring scales of syllabic unities in such a way as to produce a total effect that is pleasant to the ear. In a sense, we may therefore speak of 'the Arithmetic of Verse'. Indeed, the very word arithmetic owes its origin to a similar association of ideas. It derives originally from Greek ἀριθμητική, the art of counting from ἀριθμέω, I count, ἀριθμός, number.

The definition says that rhythm is also the 'measured flow of words and phrases in verse or poetry'. In language, therefore, Rhythm, though essential to poetry, is not exclusive to this style of self-expression. Indeed, the quotation from Cicero referred to Prose in the first place and Cicero's own orations are classical examples of rhythmical prose. On account of its common nature, many a poet discards the devices of traditional verse in favour of the easier discipline of Poetic Prose. And I must say that as the two media are capable of achieving verbal beauty there are more ways than one to Poetry. Modern poets have indeed carried the experiment to its very extreme where, I fear, the result is very often self-defeating. But that is not my subject to-day and I must not digress. To see for yourselves how traditional verse achieves harmony and proportion because it obeys tested fundamental verse-structure of traditional prosody and how Poetic Prose may achieve similar verbal effects I invite you to read aloud some of the Books of the Old Testament, the *Book of Job*, for instance, and the New Testament, Nietzche's *Das Sprach Zarathustra*, passages

from the *Hindu Bible* and some poems of Rabindrenath Tagore.

I give you a few examples. This is from the Bible: the *Book of Job*. Hear how effectively Job laments his unfortunate birth marked out for terrible trials by Satan himself with the consent of Jehovah:

> Naked came I of my mother's womb,
> and naked shall I return thither.
> The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away.
> As it hath pleased the Lord so is it done.
> Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Again from the *Book of Job*, and this time you hear the voice of God himself reproaching Job 'that wrappeth up sentences in unskilful words' for his impatience in the face of afflictions unexplainable to him but not to God that permits evil for a purpose that is good:

> Gird up thy loins like a man. I will ask thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Upon what are its bases grounded? Or who laid the corner stone thereof, When the morning stars praised me together, and all the sons of God made a joyful melody? Who shut up the sea with doors, when it broke forth as issuing out of the womb: When I made a cloud the garment thereof, and wrapped it in a mist as in swaddling bands? I set my bounds around it, and made it bars and doors: And I said: Hitherto thou shalt come, and shalt go no further. And here thou shalt break thy swelling waves. Didst thou since thy birth command the morning, and shew the dawning of the day its place? And didst thou hold the extremities of the earth shaking them? And hast thou shaken the ungodly out of it? The seal shall be restored as clay, and shall stand as a garment. From the wicked their light shall be taken away: and the high arm shall be broken. Hast thou entered into the depths of the sea, and walked in the lowest parts of the deep? Have the gates of death been open to thee, and hast thou seen the darksome doors? Hast thou considered the breadth of the earth? Tell me, if thou knowest all things? Where is the way where light dwelleth; and where is the place of darkness? That thou mayst bring every thing to its own bounds, and understand the paths of the house thereof. Didst thou know then that thou shouldst be born? And didst thou know the number of thy days? Hast thou entered into the storehouses of the snow? Or hast thou beheld the treasures of the hail? (XXXVIII. 2-22)

The temptation to go on is irresistible for there are so many diamonds

that light up at every passage that you wish you could pick more and more to dazzle the curious eye and charm the musical ear. Note how rhythmical is the translation of the Hebrew book; how Oriental is its lavish imagery; how pleasant the effect.

To show how Poetic Prose achieves beauty of imagery (freed from the strait jacket of traditional metres), I now read to you a rhythmic translation of one of the Vedic hymns in *Hindu Scriptures* (Everyman's Library p. 21) dedicated to Dawn, the Goddess *Agni*, the goddess of Fire, (remember your Latin *ignis*). It shares with the biblical passages I have just read a lavishness of Oriental imagery and a pleasant flow of rhythms.

TO DAWN

She hath shone brightly like a youthful woman, stirring
to motion every living creature.
Agni hath come to feed on mortals' fuel. She
hath made light and chased away the darkness.

Turned to this all, far-spreading, she hath risen and
shone in brightness with white robes about her.
She hath beamed forth lovely with golden colours,
mother of kine, guide of the days she bringeth.

Bearing the gods' own eye, auspicious lady, leading
her courser white and fair to look on,
Distinguished by her beams, Dawn shines apparent, come
forth to all the world with wondrous treasure.

Draw nigh with wealth and dawn away the foeman; prepare
for us white pasture free from danger.
Drive away those who hate us, bring us riches: pour
bounty, opulent lady, on the singer.

Send thy most excellent beams to shine and light us,
giving us lengthened days, O Dawn, O Goddess;
Granting us food, thou who hast all things precious,
and bounty rich in chariots, kine and horses.

O Ushas, nobly born, daughter of heaven, whom the
Vashistas with their hymns make mighty,
Bestow thou on us vast and glorious riches, preserve
us evermore, ye gods, with blessings.

Again I am sure you admire the lavish imagery and the poetical vision

expressed through a medium completely different from that of traditional prosody, and in a heightened, colourful style completely alien to our mentality and intellectual sympathies.

The two passages I have given you are both from ancient Oriental religious literature. I must now give you two modern examples of rhythm at the service of a Poetic Idea.

Hear this brief passage from *Song of the Open Road* by Walt Whitman:

> Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
> Healthy, free, the world before me,
> The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.
>
> Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune,
> Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,
> Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,
> Strong and content I travel the open road.
>
> The earth, that is sufficient,
> I do not want the constellations any nearer,
> I know they are very well where they are,
> I know they suffice for those who belong to them.

This passage has none of the scintillating jewels of Oriental imagery. It is American, down to 'the earth that is sufficient', evidently less profusely colourful because less inspired, but like the previous passage, it is no less dependent on the steady flow of rhythm for its existence as poetry. One last passage now from T.S. Eliot's *Ash Wednesday:*

> Because I do not hope to turn again
> Because I do not hope
> Because I do not hope to turn
> Desiring this man's gift and that man's scope
> I no longer strive to strive towards such things
> (Why should the agèd eagle stretch its wings?)
> Why should I mourn
> The vanished power of the usual reign?

The four passages I have read out to you share a common feature; their poetic effect is based primarily on *Rhythm.* But rhythm, as I told you, is shared also by Prose (whole passages of Hazlitt's essays, for instance, would yield excellent examples of such prose). What, therefore, gives to these passages their poetic stamp? For that they are poetic I feel we all agree; they share the word-rhythm tool common to prose and a height of

emotion common to inspired Poetry, Wherein, therefore lies the dividing line between rhythmical prose and poetic prose or poetic *vers libre*? What accounts for the difference? It is 'inspiration'. Genuine poetry, good poetry I mean, is inspired and inspiration creates its own peculiar language mirroring the poet's own soul in a state of exaltation or exultation and no less the poet's own times. Have you not noted the difference in the words and images used in the poetry of Walt Whitman and T.S. Eliot? Poetry therefore is an emotional expression that is independent of its medium, transcending the verbal technique of the chosen metre. All that is required to imprison poetic emotion within a recognisable pattern is to ensure the pleasant flow of a suitable rhythm, and a metre without which poetry evaporates. In the arresting passage from the *Book of Job* which I read out to you, we came across startling images expressing the sense of wonder at God's own creative purpose as in the birth of snow and hail. In the biblical passage the poetic impact of this idea is contextual, that is, it is expressed by felicitous imagery in a context of startling images lighting up other facets of the same idea. In Francis Thompson's poem *To A Snowflake* we have a similar idea compressed into a more disciplined medium of mixed traditional metre. Both media, I mean the Biblical and Francis Thompson's, achieve poetic beauty and a common purpose. Both are therefore poetically satisfying.

At this stage we can recapitulate what we have said: The poet has his own workshop and craft. Naturally, like every good craftsman, he has suitable tools with which to work. These tools are, a huge block of sounds, intelligible sounds which we call words out of which, like Michelangelo out of marble, he carves his own verses; words are cut up into bricks which we call feet (known by various names according to the number and places of stresses, i.e. made up of a metre, a number of feet forming a rhythmical group) and these 'sound-bricks' when put together according to plan, produce harmonious units. Together then they produce that pleasant flow of verbal music which we call *rhythm* very often stressed by rhyme-effects. Words and measures are the Poet's tools. In their combination lies the technique of his craft. But good craftsmanship alone does not create poetry. It may create well-tuned verse but not poetry. Indeed, I could mechanically cut up and move about a few of the scores of lines in one of the leaders of the *Sunday Times* in such a way as to make them not only look but also read like verse. The process being purely mechanical, an experiment in verbal ingenuity, it would be useless to look for 'poetry'. It would be no more than a 'leader' in verse! The reason is that inspiration alone moves words and ideas in their suitable order in proportion to the depth plumbed and reached by the emotion that creates it. Uninspired

verse is no more poetry than a corpse is a living human being. Where there is no breath there is neither heart-beat nor life; likewise, where there is no inspiration there is neither emotion nor poetry. We all know this. The difficulty is how to tell inspired verse from uninspired verse. The word 'inspiration' itself is an inadequate word. Its historical connotation takes us back to the time when the poet was considered a 'Vates', a Seer, prompted to speak and sing by some supernatural agency. In this sense it is appropriate to speak of the books of Scripture as inspired but its extended analogical sense as applied to Poetry means something altogether different. It means 'prompted by the stress of the poet's own irrepressible emotion'. In this sense inspiration has a primarily physical basis though by the very nature of the intellectual relationship between the objects that provoke it and the mind that works on them, it has its roots no less in the human psyche.

The Latin *vates* was 'a soothsayer, foreteller, prophet; an oracle, that is a teacher, master, authority in any art or profession'. Shelley in his *Defence of Poetry* proudly accepts the prophet's mantle for himself and for all true poets. Let us hear him speak about the subject: 'Poets according to the circumstances of the age and nation in which they appeared, were called, in the earlier epochs of the world, legislators, or prophets: a poet essentially comprises and unites both characters. For he not only beholds intensely the present as it is and discovers those laws according to which present things ought to be ordered, but he beholds the future in the present, and his thoughts are the germs of the flower and the fruit of latest time.' As you see, Shelley favoured the classical concept of the poet as the inspired prophet and legislator. Let us now see how in his opinion the poet writes inspired poetry. In the same *Defence of Poetry* he writes that 'Man is an instrument over which a series of external and internal impressions are driven like the alternations of an ever-changing wind over and Aeolion lyre, which move it by their notion to ever-changing melody'. A similar idea is expressed also in his *Ode to the West Wind.* But all this is very vague; it tells us what inspiration does or is like by means of a figure. The reason is that inspiration is not easy to define; and I think the best thing is to explain it in terms of the Latin two words that make it up, namely *in* and *spirare* 'to breathe into' considering the poet's craft as the body and inspiration as the soul that moves it. Hence we may say that uninspired poetry is soul-less verse. It is all body but no soul.

Let us now try the analytical method on an example. In the process, it may kill out some of the poetry, but it may also tell us where and how to find inspired poetry. The method is based on (1) the relationship of words to emotion; and (2) the variable degree of such relationship. Let us see

inspiration at work in poems that are evidently so, poems that have stood the test of time because they have some imperishable quality in them that only genuine inspiration can give. Remember the passage from *Job*; if not the actual words you may recall the impression it creates. Let us analyse it. (i) The language is highly emotional; (ii) It abounds in telling figures of speech; (iii) It is simple – the apparent complexity is not linguistic but emotional; (iv) Vivid; (v) Effectively rhythmical; (vi) Pictorial; (vii) Poetically associative; and (viii) The metre is free. Similar qualities may be noted also in the translation of the *Vedic* hymn, the difference being one not so much of quality as of intensity which is greater in the *Book of Job*. The style is purely temperamental, Oriental love of colour and sensation, but by no means unrelated to the intensity of the emotions provoked by the context. In ordinary prose the whole passage might be expressed more economically thus: Job, you are complaining for no good reason. You should know that you cannot understand the ways of God for you know very little about Him and His ultimate designs. How can you understand His work if you were not with Him when he was creating the world and distributing its various parts? . . . That indeed is the essence of the biblical passage and a prose writer would not think of splitting up the component facets of a basic idea to enlarge thereon at such length, though for a rhetorical purpose many a prose-writer has done so on a smaller scale. These writers, however, have often been poets writing prose as they would have written poetry; a sufficient reason why, as Hazlitt says in one of his essays, poets are accounted bad prose-writers.

In the literary quotation I have given you from Walt Whitman the language is also emotional but it is much less so than in the Bible; it is also less figurative and less rich in pictorial effects. But the general effect is pleasant; and one can say it is good poetry though certainly inferior to the Biblical and Vedic passages. I must say that the passage I have quoted from T.S. Eliot hardly does justice to the poet (it was quoted for a different purpose). But I could easily quote longer passages from *The Waste Land,* and *The Four Quartets* which would satisfy the conditions of inspired poetry. Now in T.S. Eliot's poetry there is another ingredient that is more conspicuous than in traditional poetry; and that is the large 'associative element' and verbal undertone that express thoughts and emotions obscurely as in a penumbra. This is indeed characteristic of modern poetry but very few poets indeed have refrained from straining the new technique. Many a modern poet is obscure because he is uninspired; because he is more of a craftsman than a 'Vates'.

There are 'degrees' in inspiration as in fever. Also inspiration has its own temperature which may be high or low. The uninspired poet has hardly

any temperature; not even a low one. He may be physically and psychologically normal but insipid and unpoetic. After all, most normal men and women are unpoetic; they have no temperature. Their heart-beats do not beat fast enough to catch a spark from the flame that is inside them. It beats quietly, unemotionally, just physiologically. These men and women do not write poetry and they should be wise not to attempt it. When they do, they produce metrical exercises for their fun not poetry. That is why in an uninspired age the emphasis is on craftmanship and technique. Inspiration must be spontaneous; working either on the spur of the moment or, as in the case of Wordsworth, in moments of quiet recollection. Because inspiration is spontaneous it brooks no compulsion. That explains why most poetry written by the Laureates to satisfy one of the conditions of the honour conferred upon them, is generally poor stuff. Spontaneous inspiration creates its own language; and such poetic language is unconsciously inspired. It is as if all the words, phrases and images used and the rhythm that carries them on its pleasant flow sprung up out of nothing together, forming an integral, unsubstitutable part of a whole poetic product. Hence the inevitable word that cannot be removed from its context even by a perfect synonym, if such exists, without damaging the general effect. Try an experiment yourself; replace any of the words that the Muses' 'charm has hallowed and see the difference. You would note no difference if all words fitted equally well into the same context and atmosphere as you would not notice the impact of spontaniety if the writing of poetry were no better than filigree work, a stringing of beautiful images and sweet-sounding words. That would indeed be Artifice not true Art which like true Poetry is Nature's mirror, reflecting genuine emotion which produces its own adjectives, phrases and rhythms as by a magic wand.

Speaking of the inevitable word, I am again reminded of what Shelley says in his *Defence of Poetry*. He says that poets are also makers of language, that every poet has his own language and that is the language in which inspiration clothes the words and the sequences of images. The uninspired word, therefore, cannot do the work of the inspired word even if more or less it means the same thing. Such replacements would kill poetry even if they did not touch the sense. To show you what I mean, I read to you the first quatrian of the famous sonnet *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer* as Keats wrote it:

> Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
> And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
> Round many western islands have I been
> Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.

As I replace a few words by their less poetic synonyms, see for yourselves the terrible difference:

Long have I journeyed in the lands of gold,
And many lovely realms and regions seen;
Round many distant islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.

The last line is so unchangeable in its fixed beauty that I could not possibly desacrate it as I have desacrated the first three lines. The difference stares us in the face. The quatrain apart from the last line has been compelled to surrender its beauty even as a crushed flower is compelled to surrender its perfume. Similar experiments could be tried on other famous poems in any language. Inspired language is immutable and when poetry begins to be written not from the heart but by the help of a rhyming dictionary and Roget's *Thesaurus*, the angry muse will beat a retreat. Poetry can become a cerebral exercise, an artificial flower that yields no perfume of its own, a pale imitation that can only deceive the uninitiated.

Inspiration is obviously a quality that one experiences in reading a good poem and that the genuine poet experiences in *feeling* when writing his poem. It is something we feel, see at work but cannot easily confine within the bounds of a definition or refer to one or two standard examples, for like the wind that bloweth where it listeth it blows in different directions and in different ways. Though it is in a sense like temperature to which I have already compared it, it is not so easy to take a poet's temperature. As the Muses' fever burns at different degrees, it is only by comparison of one degree of inspiration as 'felt' in one work of art with another as felt in another work of art that one can place the different poems in their order of inspiration. Hence the classification of minor and major poets, poets with a limited message and poets with a universal message; poets that compel an audience to listen and poets that have difficulty in compelling the attention of an audience. Here again the degree of inspiration cannot be safely estimated from the degree of the attraction it exercises on the general public. Kipling may be more popular than Browning, whose reading public has always been limited, but Browning is certainly the greatest poet. Though we cannot imprison inspiration within hard and fast rules, we can feel it provided our ears are well tuned and our emotions are responsive. Keats wrote that 'it is easier to think what poetry should be than to write it'.

I have given you examples of inspired poetry whose compelling force it is not easy to ignore. I give you now a poem which, in my opinion, satisfies the traditional verse-technique of a good sonnet but is otherwise no

more poetry than prose. Here is a sonnet by William Blathwayt. The title is *Celestial Photography* and it is all about William Cranch Bond, born at Portland, Maine, in 1789, the scientist that began celestial-Photography.

A hundred years have passed and passed away
Since first professor Bond turned on the sky
The new invention of photography
Which helped to chart the night's superb display;
For now no star sends out the feeblest ray
Wholly unnoticed, though the human eye
Might very easily just pass it by
Amidst the host of stars we would betray.

Thus too we learn that in the depths of Space
Shine galaxies which we should never know
Through any mortal sight however keen;
Yet in our star maps these now take their place.
The photography plate does clearly show
That which no human eye has never seen.

Except from the formal rhyme's scheme there is nothing in the sonnet that might not have been said much better in prose. This is the nagative method, I know; but it sets off the character of inspired poetry. It is a method which you might try for yourselves with great profit. It helps to train the imagination and the right taste, developing the critical sense that will not let itself be deceived by the outside form or the trite hackneyed phrase out of which all poetry has been emptied.

Before I finish this talk, I want to tell you something first about the physical nature of Poetry, then about its decline in our times. Is it as we are often told the flower of neurosis, *un fleur du mal*? Is poetic genius a disease? If in the affirmative, we would have to say that what we call 'inspiration' is, after all, a very dubious gift. We all know examples of the infirmities of genius – Tasso in a madhouse; Verlaine behaving irresponsibly; Rimbaud shocking prude society ladies with obscene language; Baudelaire struggling unsuccessfully against his own evil demon. These are only a few of the poets whose pen moved instinctively to the compelling rhythm of great poetry. Were they mad? Was the inspiration that drove their pens through sheets of writing paper producing immortal verse nothing but the compulsion of a psychic disturbances? Ben Jonson in his *Discoveries upon Men and Matter* first published in 1641 writes: First we require in our Poet or maker (for that Title our language affords him elegantly with the Greek) a goodness of natural wit. For whereas all other

arts consist of doctrine and precepts, the Poet must be able by nature and instinct to pour out the Treasure of his mind, and as Seneca saith *Aliquando secundum Anacreontem insanire jucundum esse,* by which he understands the Poetical Rapture. And according to that of Plato, *Frustra Poeticas fores sui compos pulsavit.* And of Aristotle, *Nullum magnum ingenium sine mixtura dementiae fuit. Nec potest grande aliquid, et supra caeteros loqui, nisi mota mens.* Then it riseth higher, as by a divine instinct, when it contemns common and known conceptions. It utters somewhat above a mortal mouth. Then it gets aloft and flies away with his Rider, whether, before, it was doubtful to ascend. This the Poets understood by their Helicon, Pegasus, or Parnassus; and this made Ovid to boast:

> Est, Deus in nobis, agitante calescimus ille;
> Sodibus aethereis spiritus ille venit.

In this passage we have not only Ben Jonson's own opinion of the nature of Inspiration (he calls it *ingenium)* but the old prejudice that poetry is, in a sense, a mental infirmity. Strangely enough, in the history of our groping civilization insanity was often reputed to be a manifestation of divine pleasure or displeasure. If poetry were nothing better than this it could not be 'a thing of beauty, a joy for ever'; and the neglect with which it has met in our times would be justified. But real, genuine poetry is independent of the behaviour of the poet who may indeed be partly abnormal in his private life. Whatever infirmity we may notice in some poets, it does not affect the nature of poetry. Emotion habitually cultivated for poetic purpose may produce mental disturbances; and not a few poets are neurotics, but this does not affect the integrity of genuine poetry.

Another question: Why has poetry declined to the extent it has in our times? Is it because inspiration is lacking or because Poetry has nothing to give us to-day? My answer to this question is that Poetry has declined for the same reason that Religion and the humanities have declined. The impact of this pretentious Age of Science, the uncertainty of life overshadowed by sinister threats of destruction without notice, wars without an ultimatum, have damaged or destroyed the sense of poetry of most men and women. There is also less leisure in a word of increasing economic stress, and, alas, Rationalism has weakened in many countries the Faith that inspired Milton and Dante; a Faith that, unfortunately, has not lost all her believers everywhere for it still makes its voice heard amidst so much desolation in the poetry of T.S. Eliot and others. But the Christian poets are fewer and the younger poets that have tried the Gospel of a new negative Religion whose ingredients are neither charity nor love but class

hatred and destruction have been unable to replace the Old religion adequately. They have produced a New Verse that is lifeless and insufferably pretentious divorced from the general feeling of the common man.

Contemporary poetry has a very small market and very few shrines. It is predominantly cliquey, propagandist and ideological. The general reader has found nothing strong enough in it to attract him. No poetry that lacks a compelling force can endure. And what is there strong enough in modern belief to be poetically compelling? Expression of physical and ideological violence may exercise a certain amount of morbid fascination especially on the younger generation but its spell is soon broken. There can be no compelling force in mere technique which, as the body is more important than its raiment, cannot be more important than the subject-matter and its emotional content. The muse for the time being has returned to Olympus waiting for better times, times that will be glorified as in the times of great creative Art by the compelling force of the Ideals that feed the sacred fire of Inspired Poetry.

CALPURNIANA

By H. MacL. Currie

THE edition of the *Eclogues* of Calpurnius Siculus (along with the *Laus Pisonis* and the *Laus Caesaris*) published in 1954 by M. Raoul Verdière (*Collection Latomus*, vol. xix) represents the latest contribution to Calpurnian studies, but it has not, in many respects, assisted the interpretation of this author, for the editor, dazzled by some of M. Léon Herrmann's more subtle but yet improbable hypotheses, has loaded his introductory material and notes with wild conjectures and eccentric opinions, thus dismaying and dissatisfying the reader. Of previous editions those of J. C. Wernsdorf (*Poetae Latini Minores*, vol. ii, Altenburg, 1780) and of C. H. Keene (London, 1887) are the most useful. Below are discussed several points which still seem to require exegesis or deserve reconsideration.

Eclogue 1, 54-57:

> candida pax aderit; nec solum candida vultu
> qualis saepe fuit quae libera Marte professo,
> quae domito procul hoste tamen grassantibus armis
> publica diffudit tacito discordia ferro.

publica codd.; iubila G. Hermann; vulnera Leo; lubrica Phillimore (C.R. xl, p. 43); fulmina H. Schenkl;[2] p. confodit t. praecordia f. Maehly (quoted in app. crit. by Giarratano, *Calpurnii et Nemesiani Bucolica*, Paravia ed., Turin, 1943).

'If *publica* is right, *discordia* must be plural of *discordium*, a rare neuter form.' (J. W. and A. M. Duff, *Minor Latin Poets*, Loeb Classical Library, revised ed., 1935, p. 223). Research, however, shows that the existence of *discordium* is extremely doubtful – see Thes. Ling. Lat. 1340, 30, and 1341, 79. Could we take *publica* as plural of the neuter noun *publicum* and treat *discordia* as an adjective? For *publicum* (– 'the commonwealth', 'community', 'State', 'city' etc.) L. and S. cite Pliny Ep. 9, 13, 21, *consulere in publicum*, and Livy 26, 27, and 39, 44, may be compared for the same usage of the word. Here Calpurnius could be using a poetic plural; or there could be a special point in the plural – 'the different constituent members of the State'. Janus Ulitius in his *Auctores rei venaticae antiqui cum bucolicis Nemesiani et Calpurnii cum commentariis* (Leyden, 1635) made this suggestion but it has been ignored (although Keene re-

fers to it). If we are not going to attempt emendation (a risky and dubious venture in this instance), it is better to accept the plural (not elsewhere found) of an attested neuter noun than the plural of a noun whose very authenticity has not been definitely established.

ibid., 73-76:

> exsultet quaecumque Notum gens ima iacentem
> erectumve colit Boream, quaecumque vel ortu
> vel patet occasu mediove sub aethere fervit.

patet codd.; tepet Postgate (C.R. xv, p. 213) followed by H. Schenkl, *Corp. Poet. Lat.*, vol. ii, 1905; fervit GP; servit NV.

Palaeographically there is nothing between *fervit* and *servit*, but the meaning is much better accommodated with the former reading. Accepting it and wishing to introduce the balance which he felt necessary, Postgate proposed *tepet* which has not been generally favoured. 'Moderate warmth' may not seem to be a true opposition to the strong expression *fervit*, but it is certainly a better one than *patet* with which there is no antithesis at all. Words cognate with *tepere* are quite often found in Calpurnius – viz. 5, 31, *tepefecerit* and ibid., 60, *tepescere*; at 2, 79 and at 5, 27 and 102, *tepidus*. At 5, 41, too, *patenti* is found in one group of inferior MSS (w in Schenkl), while the other group (v in Schenkl) has *tepenti* which is certainly right.[1] Considering this evidence, then, as well as the needs of the context, we ought to receive *tepet* in 76.

Eclogue 4, 58-63 (Corydon is speaking):

> quod si tu faveas trepido mihi, forsitan illos
> experiar calamos, here quos mihi doctus Iollas
> donavit dixitque: 'truces haec fistula tauros
> conciliat, nostroque sonat dulcissima Fauno.
> Tityrus hanc habuit, cecinit qui primus in istis
> montibus Hyblaeis modulabile carmen avena.'

Corydon in this poem is clearly Calpurnius himself, but who is *Iollas?* E. Cesareo (*La Poesia di Calp. Sic.*, Palermo, 1931, p. 174) leaves the question open, but Wernsdorf saw a reference to some poet or scholar who had encouraged Calpurnius in his literary efforts. Theocritus has been canvassed as a possibility, but, it has been argued, if this is so, then *Tityrus* cannot be Virgil! Firstly, however, in this eclogue at 161 the poet indisputably uses the name *Tityrus* to signify Virgil and secondly

[1] Giarratano does not approve of Schenkl's subdivision into v and w, we may note.

this identification was commonly held in antiquity – see, for example, Propertius 2, 34, 72 and Martial 8, 55. The assumption that *Iollas* = *Theocritus* is, further, attractive for, with these two identifications accepted, the lines would be exhibiting, as it were, an apostolic succession in the genre of bucolic poetry. The difficulty over chronology could be removed by an alteration in the punctuation. Take from *truces* to *Fauno* as an utterance of *Iollas* and leave *Tityrus* to *avena* in the mouth of *Corydon*. By this means the poet would be saying that *Iollas*, speaking a commendatory word or two, had given him the pipes (the sign and symbol of bucolic poetry) and that *Tityrus* once owned them. With this interpretation *Iollas* would be seen as the patron and promoter of this literary genre (i.e. Theocritus), controlling and dispensing ability in it. He had bestowed his gift on Virgil and, Virgil turning to other kinds of poetry,[2] he now bestows it on Calpurnius. Presumptuous immodesty this may be, but such hopeful claims to comparison with great predecessors are not uncommon amongst Roman writers. The rebuke, too, of Meliboeus in 64 (*magna petis, Corydon, si Tityrus esse laboras*) would seem to confirm the ascription of 62-3 to *Corydon*.

What of *istis* in 62? Would it not more appropriately come from the lips of *Iollas* than from those of *Corydon?* Not necessarily, for frequently *iste* has a general reference and simply = 'this, that'. The sense 'those of yours' need not, however, be absent here; *Corydon* could rightly use the word thus inasmuch as with the new punctuation he would be addressing his countryman, *Meliboeus*.[3]

Eclogue 6, 76-78:

> tu modo nos illis (iam nunc, Mnasylle, precamur)
> auribus accipias, quibus hunc et Acanthida nuper
> diceris in silva iudex audisse Thalea.

How is *Acanthida* to be explained? Alii alia. Wernsdorf, for example, in a learned note (op. cit., excursus xvii) recalls the witch of the same name in Propertius 4, 5, 63, and remarks on the appearance elsewhere in bucolic poetry of witches. Keene refers us to Wernsdorf and to Adelung (who assumes *Acanthis* to be a shepherd) but is hesitant. Propertius was probably known to Calpurnius – see P. J. Enk's edition of the first book (Leyden, 1946) where there is given a list of lines in later poets other than Ovid

[2] In 160-3 of this eclogue C., referring to the patronage of Maecenas, actually traces Virgil's career as a poet.

[3] *Meliboeus* = Seneca, C.'s patron (G. Sarpe, *Questiones Philologicae*, Rostock, 1819). For other identifications of M. see the two Duffs, op. cit., pp. 211-2, and the literature there cited.

which may owe something to Propertius – but such an allusion here would surely be gratuitous and obscure, whilst Adelung's shepherd seems to do very little for the required meaning. The comments of Verdière are daringly speculative; *Acanthis* is the title 'd'un poème animalier dans le genre du Moineau de Catulle, du Perroquet d'Ovide et du Perroquet que Stace devait écrire par la suite'» This is ingenious but quite unsubstantiated. L. Herrmann (cited by Verdière) pursues his theories concerning the interior prosopography of the pieces and regards Astylus as the fabulist Phaedrus and Acanthis as one of his rivals.

Such conjectures read too much into the lines. Can a solution not be bought more cheaply? The context shows that the three lines quoted above must contain some gibe at *Astylus* (hunc).[4] The word *acanthis* as a common noun obviously meaning some bird of sweet song has already occurred in the eclogue.[5] May not *Lycidas* be insultingly repeating it here (= 'a good singer', 'someone who really can sing'), thus provoking the angry retort of *Astylus*? This suggestion (not apparently made hitherto) would rid us of the difficulty. The previous use of the word by the same speaker in conversation with the offended party strengthens it. And to apply the name of an animal to a human being with the implication that he possesses qualities or characteristics of that creature is not unusual. Compare the use of ἀηδών and of *asinus*.

Purser (quoted by Keene) may well be right when in 78 he takes *Thalea* as a nominative (= 'a true bucolic muse'), but something could perhaps be said for the view that *Thalea* is a proper noun doing duty as an adjective (cp. Virgil, *Aeneid* 4, 552, *cinis Sychaeus*) qualifying *silva*, the whole line being a reference to Virgil, Eclogue 6, 2, *nostra nec erubuit silvas habitare Thalea*. Whatever be the correct way to understand *Thalea*, to print *acanthida* (with a small 'a'[6]) and treat it as a common noun, as is suggested above, would give easier sense to the passage, for *Lycidas'* taunt could be interpreted thus: 'Please listen to our competition with those ears (i.e. open and unprejudiced) with which you listened to the performance of this man and of a true artist and you will not fail to notice my superiority to him.'

[4] Cp. 79–80: *non equidem possum, cum provocet iste, tacere; rumpor enim merito; nihil hic nisi iurgia quaerit.*

[5] 6–8 (Lycidas speaking): *Nyctilon ut cantu rudis exsuperaverit Alcon,/ Astyle, credibile est, si vincat acanthida cornix,/ vocalem superet si dirus aedona bubo.* Thompson (*Greek Birds*) thinks the *acanthis* is a goldfinch or linnet; Royds (*The Beasts and Bees of Virgil*) a warbler of some kind. C.'s *acanthis* is clearly a notable singer.

[6] We may observe (although it does not prove anything) that according to Verdière's app. crit. at least two MSS. have *acanthida* (with a small 'a').

LA POESIA ITALIANA D'OGGI

By G. CURMI

LE tre più importanti scuole letterarie che fiorirono in questa prima metà del Novecento – la scuola crepuscolare, la scuola futurista e la scuola ermetica – durarono quasi uno stesso periodo di tempo, circa vent'anni: tutte e tre suscitarono grandi polemiche e diedero qualche poeta di pregio, ma tutte e tre sono ora per sempre tramontate, e rinchiuse nel casellario o nel sepolcreto della storia, coi loro meriti e coi loro demeriti, col loro bene e col loro male, con le loro vittorie e con le loro sconfitte. E senza dubbio nessuno penserà mai a risuscitarle. Quale è dunque la poesia d'oggi? E quale sarà la poesia nuova, la poesia di domani?

Nel passato, nei secoli scorsi, era costume di indicare le caratteristiche d'una data tendenza letteraria quando questa aveva già preso fisonomia e consistenza, e aveva già dato i suoi poeti e i suoi prosatori. Nel nostro secolo questo processo venne invertito: si tracciò, o si dettò, le caratteristiche di una data tendenza letteraria prima che questa fosse ancora nata, e si chiamò a gran voce, o addirittura si obbligò gli scrittori ad aderire a questa tendenza, col risultato logico ed ovvio che si ebbero non scuole letterarie vere e proprie, ma vere e proprie rettoriche letterarie. Perchè la poesia, soffio dell'anima, non può avere imposizioni di sorta. Non le si può dire: questo deve essere il tuo argomento; questa deve essere la tua forma.

Errore grave fu dunque quello dei Novecentisti di escogitare formole, di dettare regole, di preordinare gruppi, perchè soltanto nell'autonomia più assoluta e nell'indipendenza più completa fioriscono e irrobustiscono gli artisti.

Ma l'uomo è caparbio, e non si lascia ammaestrare dagli insegnamenti della storia. Gli errori ormai ripetuti per quasi tre generazioni, con risultati sempre più disastrosi, non sono stati sufficienti ad aprire gli occhi a nessuno, e si stanno per ripetere un'altra volta. Si sta per ricadere nello stesso errore dei cinque decenni scorsi. Si vuole anch'oggi segnare limiti, suggerire programmi, additare orizzonti, creare ambienti, delineare ordini nuovi.

Il Papini, ad esempio, riconoscendo che l'epoca attuale non può durare, perchè è in pieno dissolvimento, e sostenendo che l'epoca nuova non può essere nè romantica nè medioevale, predice e predica un ritorno al Rinascimento. Lui così vivo, così moderno, così polemista in nome della vita,

vuole un ritorno ad un'epoca morta, a una civiltà sorpassata, a un clima che non può essere ravvivato. «Il romanticismo – egli dice – entrò in agonia alla fine dell'Ottocento e ora *jam foetet*... Decadentismo, simbolismo, cubismo, futurismo, dadaismo, surrealismo, espressionismo, realismo magico, ermetismo, ecc., non sono che tanti studi e sussulti del progressivo dissolvimento romantico. Siamo ancora nel Romanticismo, ma tutto dice e ammonisce che dobbiamo uscirne, che si sta per abbandonarlo, che si sta preparando una nuova epoca. La quale, se davvero dovrà essere non romantica e neppure medioevale, dovrà per forza tornar allo spirito = non all'imitazione – della Classicità e della Rinascita.»

Il Papini, in altre parole, non vuole suscitare soltanto l'erudizione del Rinascimento, ma l'anima: vuole cioè trasformare in vita l'erudizione del passato. Egli pone il Rinascimento fra la nascita del Petrarca (1304) e la morte del Buonarroti (1564), e dà del Rinascimento una interpretazione molto originale e molto curiosa. Interpreta il Rinascimento come «l'imitazione del Padre, l'imitazione del Creatore dell'universo» in contrasto col Medioevo, che egli interpreta come «l'imitazione del Figlio». Dice infatti: «Il Rinascimento, rispetto al Medio Evo, fu l'imitazione del Padre sostituita all'imitazione del Figlio. All'*Imitazione di Cristo*, che riassume l'ascetismo monastico, succede il *De dignitate hominis* di Pico della Mirandola, proclamazione degli obliterati diritti dell'uomo, creatura divina del divino universo.» E aggiunge, ribadendo e riconfermando il suo concetto: «I medioevali volevano conformarsi all'umiltà e al martirizzamento del Redentore; i grandi della Rinascita vollero ritrovare, per mezzo dell'arte e della conoscenza, la grandezza, la bellezza, l'amore di Dio attraverso le opere sue, nella contemplazione, esplorazione e riproduzione di quel suo capolavoro ch'è l'universo e di quel suo ultimogenito ch'è l'uomo».

A parte l'assurdità di questa interpretazione del Rinascimento – e diciamo «assurdità» perchè, con tutta la nostra migliore intenzione e disposizione, non arriviamo a capire come mai possano entrare in quest'ordine spirituale di concetti un Aretino e un Machiavelli – a parte l'assurdità di questa interpretazione del Rinascimento, il suggerimento papiniano di far macchina indietro, di percorrere a ritroso cinquecento anni, è impossibile perchè non possiamo noi oggi pensare col cervello di ieri, sentire col cuore di ieri, respirare nell'atmosfera di ieri: e anche se fosse possibile sarebbe disastroso, perchè questo costituirebbe un rinnegare cinque secoli di progresso e di sviluppo spirituale.

Ma l'errore più grave insito nel suggerimento del Papini è quello di cui dicemmo in principio. Invocare un ritorno al Rinascimento è preordinare una tendenza, un'atmosfera, un movimento, una scuola; è presentare ai

poeti una ricetta stereotipata e ordinare loro di adeguarcisi nella forma e nel contenuto; è, cioè, ripetere l'errore dei crepuscolari, dei futuristi, degli ermetici; è, cioè, togliere l'autonomia ai poeti, soffocandone l'ingegno, strozzandone il sentimento, rendendoli schiavi di una fissazione e di una infatuazione. E il peggio è che un ritorno al Rinascimento non sarebbe neanche un movimento spirituale nuovo, ma un movimento spirituale vecchio, già arrivato a piena maturazione, già pervenuto all'apice della perfezione, tramontato ed esaurito, morto putrefatto e sepolto sotto il cumulo delle macerie di ben cinque secoli.

Per quanto il Rinascimento abbia nella storia della civiltà umana un posto indiscutibilmente altissimo, e il Futurismo, ad esempio, non ne abbia alcuno, pure, da questo punto di vista, un ritorno al Rinascimento sarebbe meno pregevole dell'avvento del Futurismo, perchè quando il Futurismo apparve sulla piazzaforte della letteratura, e spronò i poeti a cantare la vita dinamica moderna, cioè, l'automobile, l'aeroplano, l'elettricità, la radiotelegrafia, i transatlantici, le industrie, la corsa e il pugilato, presentò almeno qualche cosa nuova, presentò almeno un aspetto nuovo della vita. Il Rinascimento, invece, non ci presenterà nulla di nuovo, e un suo ritorno sarebbe soltanto il riflesso sbiadito di una civiltà passata, civiltà senza dubbio grande, ma non più conforme al nostro modo di pensare e di sentire, e quindi non più adatta ai nostri bisogni artistici e spirituali. E una civiltà artificialmente creata sarebbe una civiltà priva d'anima, una civiltà fittizia e rettorica che ci darà un'arte falsa e un'interpretazione ipocrita della vita.

Ma a parte tutto questo, crede davvero il Papini, il Papini della *Storia di Cristo*, che proprio del clima del Rinascimento abbia bisogno l'umanità d'oggi, così tormentata nello spirito? Certamente non quel clima, inquinato di paganesimo fino ai precordi, varrà a consolare gli uomini d'oggi, assetati di cielo, se bene insozzati di fango: ma un altro clima caso mai, molto diverso, benchè molto più antico, cioè il clima del Cristianesimo; di quel Cristianesimo che in teoria esiste da ben due mila anni, ma che è oggi praticato da pochissimi. ragione per cui il mondo è così come è.

Meglio dunque, per il bene della stessa letteratura, meglio dunque non discutere scuole letterarie prima che queste siano bene avviate e abbiano preso solida consistenza, meglio dunque non preannunciare o profetizzare o creare a forza indirizzi vecchi o nuovi, ma limitarci a segnalare i poeti moderni e vedere se ci sia in essi un atteggiamento nuovo della sensibilità e del pensiero, e cercare se ci siano in essi i germi di nuovi indirizzi e di nuove tendenze. Così ha fatto recentemento Ugo Fasolo[1], presentando diciotto poeti nuovi, di cui la maggior parte sono assolutamente

[1] *Nuovi poeti*: Vallecchi, Firenze.

nuovi e inediti, e di cui più della metà sono ancora sotto i trenta anni.

Analizzando questa poesia nuova il Fasolo nota che l'età delle torri d'avorio, dell'arte avulsa dalla vita, è tramontata, e che i poeti nuovi hanno ripreso contatto con il mondo, ispirandosi più di prima all'elemento umano e riaffrontando la vita in una partecipazione totale. E gli par d'avvertire nella lirica nuova non un ritorno al Romanticismo, come sostengono i più, ma, come vuole il Papini, una ripresa di umanesimo. «Diremo dunque – egli dice – che si preannuncia un nuovo romanticismo come già è stato detto? Non lo crediamo; troppo vigile ed esperto è il senso formale e troppo evidente la consapevolezza critica perchè ciò possa essere. Meglio ancora diremo che manca per un nuovo romanticismo, l'entusiasmo e la spontaneità di credere e di affidarsi a facili e imprecisi miti..... Credo sia perciò giusto il parlare di una ripresa di umanesimo, sia pure nel senso limitato che oltre i pallidi o taglienti rigori di un astrattismo sensibile che fatalmente avrebbe dovuto deviare in accademia, gli uragani sul nostro mondo, e la vasta precarietà della umana esistenza, abbiano fatto risorgere le domande più gravi della nostra natura d'uomini ridando ad essa il riconoscimento di una sua valida realtà che oggi riprende anche forma e linguaggio di arte e poesia.»

Non tutti i diciotto poeti presentati dal Fasolo sono veramente nuovi nello spirito e nella forma. In parecchi, ed è naturale – perchè nello svolgimento della poesia non ci possono e non ci dovrebbero essere salti – si nota ancora troppo forte l'influsso della poesia ermetica, tanto che dei duecento e cinquantasette componimenti lirici raccolti nel volume, soltanto un terzo si capiscono facilmente, un altro terzo si capiscono press'a poco soltanto dopo la seconda o la terza lettura, e un altro terzo non si capiscono affatto per quanto si leggano un numero indefinito di volte.

A quest'ultima categoria appartengono in modo particolare le liriche di Tommaso Giglio, nato a Pontecorvo il 24 settembre 1923, le liriche di Marcello Landi, nato in Maremma nell'agosto del 1916, e le liriche di Berto Morucchio, nato a Venezia nel 1922. Il primo ha quartine come la seguente:

> Questo, adesso, il mio cuore, poi che un anno
> di noi è passato sui vetri
> dove la pioggia ha urlato senza pace
> il lamento dei vivi.

e versi come questi:

> Avrai un volto anche tu, nella stanca
> memoria degli anni che non restano
> e il tempo finirà di bruciare.

Il Landi è anche più oscuro di Giglio. Nelle sue liriche troviamo versi di questo genere:

chissà a una svolta d'incuranti lumi,
passò d'addio una folla che disparve
lungo archi fatti angeli di luna,
chiamando il nome di qualcuno, un'ombra
in un gesto perduta.

e versi siffatti:

Il peso delle tempie è la mia soglia
che sfocia sulla porta d'altri cieli.

Il Morucchio è enigmatico almeno quanto il Landi. Compone versi di questa specie:

Non acqua di fiume alle labbra,
ma vento alla mente che ama.

Non è il Tempo che scarna:
il mio cuore di bistro,

la sciarada melensa della notte,
è la mia solitudine lebbrosa.

e ancora:

Cos'è canta l'uccello e il mare addensa.
E facile è il mattino: sperderai nell'alba:

Una sola lirica ha il Morucchio che si capisce proprio dal primo all'ultimo verso, e che ha bellezza e potenza d'assieme. E intitolata *Preghiera:*

Per le strade s'è accorciata la mia vita.
Non conto che un lampo di luce,
una rapida reliquia.

Fammi, o Signore, scordare
la roccia che frana,
le piaghe, gli sputi,
il freddo che indurisce, fà scordare.
E i ciechi desideri.

Toglimi, Iddio,
la memoria.

Due altri poeti nuovi che non sono riusciti finora a liberarsi dalla

schiavitù degli ermetici e a crearsi una fisonomia propria sono: Giuseppe Costantini, nato a Verbania nel 1924, e Giuseppe Fontanelli, nato a Certaldo nel 1913. Costantini scrive versi di questo genere:

L'amore è una colomba di cristallo
sulle tue spalle senza carne.

oppure:

Cadono il suoni e le parole amiche,
i sentimenti trascendono i tempi
per frangersi con le ventose
spume iridiscenti.

Soltanto quando esprime l'acuto senso di tormento che lo strazia il Costantini fa forse vera poesia, come in *Null'altro che tormento:*

Null'altro che tormento porta seco
la vita e un vuoto in cui non vale
alta gridare la mia disperazione.
Dove, dove sei pace
tanto attesa? Mi giungerai, lo so,
con una mano sulla bocca
e andremo nel silenzio
dei morti fatto luna.
Nessuna leverà
le musicali palpebre sul mondo.

Chiede il Fontanelli: «La vita cos'è se non tristezza che passerà?» Quest'amarezza della vita, congiunta a una forma arida e spesso indecifrabile, fa del Fontanelli un fedele e freddo continuatore della poesia ermetica. Egli ha liriche di questo genere:

Ah, la vita dispersa, continuato esilio.
Dove le felici isole del sogno?
Lacrime scorrono dalle aride sabbie del cuore.

Le campanule bianche in lievi tralci s'alzano.
Sulla terra vedi tristezza del cielo.

oppure:

E dolente amarezza che ci stringe,
del triste sangue, ahimè il tumulto,
il prorompente grido disumano,
mentre la strada di pietra si cuoce
al sole e il viso smuore.

Lo sperato, atteso giorno,
schiudersi del cuore a tenerezza,
è dimenticanza intorno,

e versi di questa specie:

Penso che un mare ci sommerga
e nuovi cieli
s'aprano, impetuosi.

Luciano Budigna, nato a Trieste il 26 luglio 1924, è a volte preso da un estro veramente lirico, ma poi, d'un tratto, si lascia conquidere dalla cultura ermetica e diventa enigmatico. Così in *Giorni* ha una bella strofa:

Come il caotico cuore
che a ogni ora muta desiderio
è questo giorno:
non dubbioso, certo
nelle sue metamorfosi improvvise.

che viene però seguita da quest'altra, che non dice proprio niente, e serve soltanto a guastare tutto il componimento lirico:

Ogni giorno che passa si allontana
la vita, se la vita è quella,
dalla fiducia imposta, stella sola
immagine sovrana.

Il Budigna si compiace troppo di analogie oscure e di gruppi di belle parole senza senso. Comincia la lirica *Città*:

Queste vie di città sono nel cuore
come conclusi sentimenti.

e chiude la lirica *Inizio d'anno così*:

Se mera scorza
o viva carne siano, un diverso
intervento di questo che a ogni istante
urge il fuoco a esaurire il sangue, forse,
rivelerà un futuro inconcepito.

In una categoria a sè deve essere messo Paolo Wenzel che compone endecasillabi sciolti nutriti di grande melodia e ispirati spesso da un sentimento religioso e da un anelito verso Dio, ma che poi ha la seguente lirica che è un vero arzigogolo, una vera sciarada, un vero enigma:

Nessun libro di lui che ti raggiunga
in fondo al cuore dov'è caldo e buio;

nè mano onnipotenti che ti tocchi
un attimo la spalla dolorosa.

Avvertilo nel fondo del cammino
come lo spazio che ti resta, immenso;

quando ti duole, dentro, l'incompiuto
sarà la sua pienezza che si esprime.

Il Wenzel accetta il dolore e esala il suo tormento in melodioso canto, ma si compiace troppo del senso del mistero. Dice a Dio:

Io mi rintano nel tuo buio; e ascolto:
sono il respiro delle cose buie,
Tu l'arco della notte taciturna,

Portarti voglio in me come un segreto:
Tu avrai tanta pietà da non parlarmi.

E questo senso di mistero non solo pervade tutte le sue poesie, ma è un senso insito nella sua anima. Scrive di se stesso: «Sono nato ventotto anni fa in una valle che nessuno conosce e dove neppure il sole arriva; forse non è una valle, ma un buco dove Iddio lascia vivere certi uomini perchè abbiano bisogno di Lui. Là, tra le lastre di pietra e lo scroscio della cascata, la mia giovinezza non ha conosciuto che i freddi riscintillii delle cose e la musica di ciò che fuggiva da essa. Nella valle vi sono anche praterie recinte di sassi e alberi che fioriscono, ma io avevo spesso troppa pena di me per guardarli»

Dei diciotto poeti nuovi presentati dal Fasolo, i meno affetti dalla tabe ermetica, quelli che davvero si discostano dal tono e dalle cadenze degli ermetici, e hanno un timbro nuovo e una fisonomia quasi propria, sono soltanto sei: Giuseppe Colli, Gherardo del Colle, Adolfo Diana, Raoul Diddi, Gherardo Melloni, Leonardo Rosa. Anche in questi poeti però la lirica è sempre di breve respiro, e vi si nota spesso la prosaicità, l'aridità di sentimento e l'asprezza di ritmo proprie degli ermetici.

Giuseppe Colli nacque a Lu Monferrato il 29 novembre 1924. Può considerarsi un autodidatta, benchè abbia frequentato la scuola regolare fino al ginnasio. A vent'anni fu deportato in Germania, da dove ritornò minato nella salute. Tema fondamentale della sua lirica è il dolore, che egli canta con tono melanconico, ma con una certa soavità:

Naufrago
in un mare
di dolore
con i rottami

della mia zattera
senza vele
mentre i sogni
duri a morire
cercano ancora un approdo.

La morte la descrive con molta originalità, e con un tocco delicatissimo moderno, pieno di sentimento:

La morte attese il buio
della notte
poi venne, col passo felpato
del ladro,
a spegnere la luce
dei tuoi occhi
e a tagliare il filo
delle tue parole.

Il cuore si è fermato
come un orologio stanco
di segnare le ore
della vita.

La stessa delicatezza di sentimento e la stessa nota d'umanità notiamo in *L'Addio:*

Ho visto l'ombra del crepuscolo
scendere sui tuoi occhi;
ho sentito il freddo della notte
nelle tue parole,
e l'addio era già nel cuore
e nella molle stretta
della mano.

In *Autunno* abbiamo un quadro, che racchiude, allo stesso tempo, una suggestione e uno stato d'animo, con grande sobrietà di linee che rasenta la prosa, ma è, invece, alta e genuina poesia:

Il vento ha spogliato gli alberi,
con le sue mani
fredde,
disperdendo le foglie
come un volo di passeri
spauriti.

Benchè facile a capire, tipicamente ermetica per pause e ritmo è *L'ultima*

alba:

Quando il rosario dei giorni
sarà finito
e la speranza sarà la fiaccola
dei morti,
forse si aprirà il velario
del mistero.

Nato a Cesino (Genova) il 26 novembre 1920, Gherardo Del Colle esprime in umile poesia le immagini e i pensieri che gli passano nell'animo. Non si chiude nella sua torre d'avorio, ma partecipa alla vita, si sente solidale con gli uomini e l'universo, e la gioia dei bambini, che nella strada giuocano a moscacieca, lo rasserena. Cosi nella lirica *Rosso di sera:*

... e tu bel tempo speri, anima mia.
Chiusi messaggi portano le nubi
da lontane riviere alla tua cella,
chiusi messaggi porteran le stelle
lungo la notte, e le fioche rugiade...
Ma, dalla strada, un po' di vento reca
al cuore, attento nella prima sera,
il clamore festoso e i gridi acuti
dei ragazzi giuocanti a mosca-cieca.

Gioia di bimbi nella rossa sera:
come ti rassereni, vita mia!

E in *Lamentazione* prega Dio perchè a tutti conceda il pane, e prima del pane, la pace. E la sua lamentazione non è una lamentazione, ma un canto pieno di sentimento umano e gonfio d'afflato lirico:

Che ne hanno fatto, o Signore, che cosa ne hanno fatto gli apostoli
delle sette sporte e delle dodici canestre ricolme
di pani e di pesci che avanzarono nel deserto?
Or che le nostre viscere torce una fame insaziabile
e ci riempiamo coi pugni chiusi le bocche disperatamente aperte
e strappiamo alle rocce cariate le allucinanti ginestre:
se non le hanno disperse, se non le hanno nascoste
per rivenderle sulle fiere a costo più alto,
indichi la Tua mano dove cercarle a chi togliere
perchè le fanciulle e i ragazzi si sfamino in Israele.
. . . . . .

Fioriscano le rose, le spighe e le uve e le mele maturino
per chi non ha fame e non ha sete e non è povero;
ma per i figli nostri, che soffriranno e soffrono quanto abbiamo sofferto,
stilli una goccia d'acqua la corteccia della rovere e dell'acacia
e un po' di sangue gonfi le aorte delle madri.
Se qualche spina di pesce, se qualche crosta di pane avanzò nel deserto
tienila in serbo per noi: non la contenderemo alle formiche ai cani,
ma sarà anche nostra e di tutte le tue creature.
Tu ci abbeveri, o Cristo che hai sete, d'aceto e di fiele.
Docili consentiremo alla Tua Passione e alla nostra,
e Ti chiediamo la pace. Prima che il pane, la pace.

Per nostalgia di ricordi, per schiettezza d'animo e per liricità di sentimento, il più bel canto di Del Colle è *Porta chiusa*, il più umano e il più vero, di tutta la raccolta:

Ricordi il cigolio della tua porta
sui cardini?
sorridendo mi aprivi: era già tardi
e un poco ci feriva il suo stridore.

Or che le notti tornano, e nessuno
riapre quella porta e mi sorride
tu forse piangi, che la senti stridere
più forte sopra i cardini del cuore.

Accenti di calda poesia ha pure Adolfo Diana, nato nel 1907, nel suo anelito verso la quiete e l'innocenza, nella sua aspirazione verso la pace idillica della vita, benchè, come egli dice:

Un vento oscuro
passa sul nudo inverno del mio cuore.

La nostalgia della fanciullezza, colla sua grazia e con la sua innocenza, gli ritorna spesso negli occhi stupiti e nel cuore nostalgico, ridandogli un senso di inaudita dolcezza e di rinascita:

Ecco ritorna la verde innocenza
dell'erba nuova e la grazia dei peschi
nei miei occhi stupiti; là sul fiume
d'azzurra acqua di neve silenziose
danzan le rondini lievi dell'infanzia,
e un ardore di cielo adolescente
posa sul seno ondoso della terra:
tutto a me senso di rinascite,

di nuziali abbandoni e di ritorni
d'inaudita dolcezza.

E, certo, la propria nostalgia verso l'innocenza del passato canta, quando, in *Lamento di Adamo*, mette in bocca del primo uomo queste parole di rimpianto:

Dell'antica innocenza senza tempo
mi tormenta il ricordo: mi cullava
colma di frutti, docile, la terra,
appena sul suo petto e al calmo sonno
molle cuscino d'ombra era la notte.
Ora nel sogno tremo alla tua voce
che odo irata nel tuono, e invano fuggo
da me stesso e dal cielo nella notte.
Non ha rifugio, Dio, sopra la terra,
e ogni giorno mi desta a nuova morte

Gli basta guardare la freschezza del cielo per sentire nell'anima una beatitudine infinita:

Lungo il sentiero sotto il fresco cielo
che innocente stupore! Questo tempo
che mi sfiora fu nel mio passato?
quante volte, mio Dio,
sono morto e rinato?
Lungo il sentiero sotto il fresco cielo
che innocente stupore!

Il sentimento dell'amore però lo fa più grande e più tenero poeta. Canta in *Primo amore*:

Le cose tutte più non ha valore
se non da te che a tutte dal mistero
solo passando. Colma queste strade
la tua presenza e a stento la contiene
quel tuo giardino antico. Ma se appari
il mio cuore trabocca; prigioniero
del tuo sguardo non ho quasi respiro,
e al mondo non c'è più che quel tuo sguardo.

Ed ecco con quanta potenza e con quanta grazia esprime in *Innamorata* la gioia che trasforma il volto e l'anima di una donna che è sposa:

Chi ha colmato la brocca
vuota della tua vita?

Chi ti ha così mutata che straniera
quasi sembri a te stessa ed il passato
sonno opaco ti appare nel ricordo?
Stupefatta tu ascolti nel silenzio
l'anima farsi vasta some un bosco.
A lungo siedi alla finestra assorta
e quasi ti confondi con la sera
azzurra e con la notte sconfinata.

Per forza d'espressione e per profondità d'immagini e di pensiero, è un vero capolavoro artistico la sua brevissima lirica *Il vecchio*.

Io guardo un mondo che nessuno vede,
che da me solo ha vita e consistenza.
Se resto immoto non rimango inerte:
dalla sabbia del tempo
estraggo volti e volti senza fine.

In immagini che condensano il mondo intenso della vita che lo circonda si esprime la lirica di Raoul Diddi, nato a Montemurlo (Firenze) nel 1921, e già due volte premiato per le sue poesie, avendo vinto il primo premio al Concorso Nazionale di Poesia «Ausonia» nel 1948, e conseguito nello stesso anno il «Lauro», «San Pellegrino».

Quando sarà morto, il Diddi vorrebbe essere seppellito sotto l'Arno, per poter vedere anche da morto le cose amate che soleva vedere da vivo: le stelle che di notte illuminano di freschezza l'universo, gli amanti che si danno l'addio sotto la pallida luce della luna, la vita effimera che freme intorno, che si diverte e soffre e passa:

Se ora dovessi morire
sotto l'Arno corrente fatemi seppellire.
Vedrei come sempre ho veduto
le stelle da uno smerigliato vetro tremare
e il profondo universo illuminare
di favolosa freschezza.
Vedrei fuggire ne' veloci addii
ombre d'amore nella prima luna.
Vedrei come sempre ho veduto
con tanto piacimento
questo gran mondo accendersi e finire
nella tremula fiala d'una goccia
creata con un raggio e un po' di vento.

In *Attesa* c'è nostalgia, rimpianto, dolore, e infine un limpido scroscio

di gioia e di festa, che muta in estasi la tristezza di prima:

Non viene il mio sposo, non viene.
Le navi rientrano e partono,
ma sono senza vele,
e inutilmente alla finestra chiedo
il segreto del mare. Di lontano
con passo uguale tornan le stagioni
ad infiorar la mia nuda speranza.

Egli però non torna e sul mio cuore,
su le mie carni intanto il velenoso
dito del tempo scrive e per le vene
una gialla stanchezza mi diffonde.
Gli uccelli le foglie le nubi,
tutte le cose in fuga appena nate
han su le ali il mio lungo richiamo.
Ma una chiara vertigine le incanta,
si smarriscono tutte in fondo al mare
ali, richiami, e chiusa in un saluto
l'anima nostra invecchia sotto il sole.
Ma su! Brillate sguardi dei ritratti,
Giocate con i raggi o specchi limpidi!
Spremete giù freschezza balconi fioriti!
Chè appena sceso a terra veda festa
e gli s'inondi il cuore di canzoni
e gli sciolgano il corpo dalla notte
i nostri tepidi amplessi,

Carica di tristezza sino all'ultimo è, invece, *Gli impiccati*, lirica suggestiva e allo stesso tempo molto veristica:

Dieci le corde, dieci che aspettano e ballano
col vento bianco al cielo sporco sporche.
Dieci le corde e il passo di venti piedi ultimo
e un ultimo silenzio e tutto il mondo dentro
l'attimo vuoto d'aria.
Hanno scoperchiato un suono di tamburo,
tamburi, tamburi lungamente hanno
battuto la sorda parete dei cieli
e colpi di suono soltanto
smuovono la caligine dei monti.
Ora, le dieci corde tese che oscillano appena,

ora, le dieci teste che dicono sempre di sì,
ora, le venti gambe che in un deserto di luna
lunghissime sussultano. Ora più nulla, nulla.
Soltanto nei cuori dei monti
s'inseguono per tutta la terra
tamburi di morte, feroci tamburi a rullare.

Una calma dolcezza, derivante da un senso della natura liricamente sentita, spira nella poesia di Gherardo Melloni, nato a Milano il 4 maggio 1925.

La morbida collina, il calmo piano
accolgono il riposo dello sguardo.
Odor di terra buono
forte è nell'aria ed il silenzio,
dalla campagna calda onda di pace,
soavissimamente ampio sommerge.

Questo è il vero Melloni: il poeta della natura. La pioggia autunnale gli dà una specie di benessere, gli infonde quasi un sollievo nell'anima: egli si sente libero d'ogni peso, come se si fosse confidato in un'anima amica:

L'estate
s'era come fermata. La natura
posava in abbandono nella calma
odorosa nottata.
E pioveva: dal cielo tutto uguale
si discioglieva lenta
una pioggia autunnale.
Finalmente
fui senza peso e libero
quasi in anima amica
dolcemente mi fossi confidato.

Nella calma oscurità notturna, in cui l'aroma dell'alloro bagnato si confonde coll'odore della terra bagnata, il poeta si sente completamente tranquillo, si sente così vicino alla terra da confondersi quasi con essa, e i suoi pensieri sono leggeri leggeri, quasi cose da nulla:

Si confonde l'aroma dell'alloro
bagnato, a odor di terra
rorida. E cessato
di piovere, al crepuscolo.
Umida notte. Dilagò completo
il silenzio nel buio, appena tacque
lo stillicidio quieto delle piante.

Un tempo, a tanta
bellezza tacituma, profondava
il mio sgomento. Ora
l'aroma d'alloro mi appaga,
e in questa calma oscurità notturna
sono cose da nulla i miei pensieri
e vicini alla terra.

Anche l'amore è nel Melloni sempre unito; e a volte immedesimato, cogli aspetti della natura: sia che in *Gioia di un'attesa* canti:

Fra poco
lambirà il davanzale:
fascio di sole
fioco
che all'angolo si frange della casa
e la mia mano
tesa nell'aria sfiora....

Tra breve
vedrò lei di lontano;
passo di donna
lieve,
fragile mano a salutarmi tesa,
mento levato
un poco, ed il sorriso
rapida intensa gioia di un'attesa.

o sia che canti in *Della notte sospesa:*

Tacevi; ed ampliava meraviglia
le tue pupille
chiare come
le polle di luce lunare,
forme filtrate labili e stupite
sopra i morbidi muschi, dagli abeti
radi.
Ogni gioia intuita
nei tuoi occhi
posava muta, si che la presenza
di te pareva divenuta cosa
della notte sospesa.

A volte il Melloni ritrae quadri suggestivi, senza però le complicazioni degli ermetici, come in *Fragore di mare lontano*:

Aperti sul vuoto profondo
dei picchi,
fragore di mare lontano
da sempre
ascoltano immobili i pini

A volte, pure come gli ermetici, ma senza la loro indecifrabilità, ritrae stati d'animo concentrati in un attimo, come in *Poi nulla:*

Speranza, in un grido, infinita,
poi nulla;
un fulmine a notte
è corda di luce scagliata
nel buio; ma tesa
si spezza improvvisa.

Altre volte, invece, il Melloni quasi si accosta ai crepuscolari, pur rimanendone molto lontano per ritmo ed espressione, come in *Alla periferia*:

Non mi ricordo
da quanti giorni è chiuso, umido il cielo.
I colori uniformi del crepuscolo
nella morta caligine dell'aria
sospendono un silenzio
ovattato e profondo.

Alla periferia, tragici lembi
della città, si affanna gente misera
incapace di avere
più parole d'amore.
Le pozze nella strada senza asfalto
son tonfi taciturni
della squallida luce d'occidente.

Un poeta nuovo, che svolge un'attività industriale e collabora allo stesso tempo a varie riviste e dirige un quaderno di poesia intitolato *Momenti,* è Leonardo Rosa, nato a Torino il 14 marzo 1929. Il Rosa ha natura di vero poeta, perchè ha cuore sensibile e fresca immaginazione. In *Traccia per una poesia* ci parla della sua apparizione fugace nel mondo, del periodo breve tra la sua nascita e la sua morte, con originalità di idee, con un profondo senso della natura e con una potente semplicità lirica:

era senza di me il tempo lontano
senza ricordo il tempo...
erano prima

di me lunghissimi, lunghi
secoli di luce e calde fredde notti

un giorno
figlio mi chiamò il tempo e uomo la luce
e ombra l'ombra e allora io dissi
questo è il cielo dove vivono gli uccelli
cantano gli uccelli
e queste le acque dolci le acque amare
dove dormono i ciottoli
dove nuotano i pesci
dove giocano gli uomini fanciulli e questi sono i monti
dove il sole fiorisce si spegne
il sole ogni giorno il sole ogni notte
e questa la terra bianca
la terra nera
la terra rossa
dove gli uomini gettano il seme
gli uomini colgono i frutti

e questo è il mio volto e queste le mani
questo il cuore

poi senza di me fu il tempo
dopo di me fu notte

Nella lirica *Il canto dell'uomo vivo* c'è, accanto a molta umanità, molto tormento e molta inquietudine:

Li ho visti correre ai monti e ridere al cielo con la morte
acquattata nel cuore
e cantare lungo mura ferite per spegnere l'urlo del sangue.
Li ho visti piangere in fragile silenzio per una zolla perduta
e levare alte le mani, sulle ombre molli dei cipressi, per
sfiorare la luce.
Li ho visti freddi nei campi dormire con la morte
e pendere dai rami col capo adagiato alla preghiera.
Li ho visti volare nell'aria, oltre le nebbie, con le occhiaie vuote
e scolpire con gli angioli nel cielo parole d'amore, sorridendo ai vivi.
Io che chiudevo il cielo nelle acque gonfie dei fiumi
e gridavo ai silenzi il mio lamento più vile:
io che posava la noia sulle zolle ancora calde di sangue
e gemevo come gli usci aperti dei vinti all'alito alto dei cipressi:
io che la notte vegliavo per fuggire il gelido fiato dei morti;

io che non so la pena dell'ultima ora
e spezzavo le unghie per stringermi alla terra,
io sono coi vivi a piangere i morti.

Invece, nella breve lirica *Coroncina*, il Rosa ritorna alle analogie e alla poesia suggestiva degli ermetici che vuole raccogliere in un quadro certi stati d'animo tutto personali, e che non sempre si comunicano al lettore:

La sera si posa su gli alberi
la sera si posa sui tetti
rossi delle case.

La sera è un angelo bianco
dalle grandi ali d'ombra.

La sera è la quiete del cuore d'un tempo
posata su gli occhi.

L'impressione che si ricava da un primo studio delle liriche di questi poeti nuovi è che ci troviamo ancora di fronte alla poesia ermetica, benchè si senta in alcuni di loro un'aria di rinnovamento tanto nel contenuto quanto nel tono e nelle cadenze. Ma non vi avvertiamo ritorni di sorta: nè al romanticismo, nè all'umanesimo, come non vi avvertiamo ancora nessun grande indirizzo rivoluzionatore. Troppo era sereno ed equilibrato l'Umanesimo perchè si possa classificare umanistica l'inquietudine che pervade questa lirica moderna: troppo melodioso era il Romanticismo perchè si possa classificare romantica l'aridità e l'asprezza di questa poesia nuova. E non riscontriamo ancora nella poesia d'oggi una fisonomia propria che si distacchi da quella del passato così completamente da poter affermare che ci troviamo di fronte a una poesia veramente nuova, potente ed originale.

Anche oggi, dopo l'ultima grande guerra, continua in Italia la così detta rivolta contro la tradizione e la smaniosa ricerca del nuovo ad ogni costo; anche oggi, come in tutta la prima metà del Novecento, continuano a pullulare le riviste con programmi, a fiorire cenacoli e consorterie, mentre si moltiplicano i concorsi letterari con premi più o meno vistosi; anche oggi continuano a contendere il campo le tre principali correnti artistiche di prima della guerra: l'*esistenzialismo*, l'*automatismo psicologico* e l'*ermetismo* che, nella sua estrema decadenza, si fa sempre più oscuro e più cerebrale, e, quindi, sempre più antipoetico.

Tutto questo però non deve farci disperare della poesia di domani. Nello svolgimento della storia dello spirito non ci sono mai, e non ci dovrebbero essere, nè ritorni al passato, nè, senza miracoli, salti bruschi nel futuro; ma una continuità: una continuità verso il meglio, il più alto e il

più nobile; una continuità che sia non solo riconoscimento e potenziamento dei valori spirituali del passato, ma anche evoluzione ed ascensione umana.

Sorgerà dal gruppo dei poeti nuovi che abbiamo rapidamente esaminato il grande poeta di domani? Preferiamo, in simili contingenze, attenerci alla nota massima del Manzoni e lasciare ai posteri «l'ardua sentenza». Vogliamo però segnalare in particolar modo Gherardo Del Colle, dal quale, se non si lascerà traviare da tendenze di scuole, attendiamo i canti più belli del futuro decennio.

Dunque, nella poesia d'oggi, nella poesia del secondo dopoguerra, nè ritorni, sinora, nè risvegli. Eppure non ci disperiamo, perchè siamo certi d'un fatto: che la poesia non muore.

La poesia non può morire. Può terminare un modo di poesia, ma non la poesia. Il suo continuo risorgere dopo epoche di incertezza è prova assoluta della sua immortalità. Può conoscere periodi di freddezza, stagioni di stasi, tempi di abulia, ma non la morte. Da Adamo fino ai giorni nostri l'uomo ha sempre sentito l'impulso ingenito dell'anima verso la bontà e la bellezza, e quindi ha cantato; dai giorni nostri fino a quando un solo individuo abiterà la terra, l'uomo continuerà a sentire questo impulso dell'anima, e quindi a cantare.

Perchè chi sa interrogare la propria anima, e sa esprimere liricamente ciò che l'anima gli dice, è poeta, e, se scrive, canta. Anima, abbiamo detto: e quindi non sensualità, non bestialità, non pornografia; ma effluvio spirituale, ansito di cielo, comunicazione con Dio. Niente dunque atmosfere artificiali, niente dunque programmi dettati. Sostituiamo al teoreta l'uomo vivo, a l'uomo critico l'uomo poetico, all'uomo distruttore l'uomo creatore. Quanto meno si parla e si scrive in proposito, tanto meglio è, perchè il poeta, per poter sentire i moti genuini dell'anima e cantare, ha bisogno di pace, di solitudine, di perfetta autonomia e indipendenza.

E trattandosi di vera poesia, neanche dobbiamo indulgere nella distinzione di paesi, di razze e di epoche. La poesia, generata dall'anima, non ha confini territoriali, perchè sua patria è tutto il mondo: non ha caratteristiche di razze, perchè scaturisce dal cuore di tutta l'umanità: non ha limiti di tempo, perchè è eterna e immortale come l'anima stessa che la genera e che è creata direttamente dal soffio di Dio. E quest'anima eterna e immortale, una in tutti i paesi e in tutte le epoche, quest'anima che ci ha dato Omero e Virgilio, Dante e Shakespeare del passato, ci darà indubbiamente Omero e Virgilio, e Dante e Shakespeare di domani.

THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY 1839-42

By J. CASSAR PULLICINO

THE reform of University studies contemplated in the Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Affairs of Malta, which was published in 1838, included arrangements for the provision of a University Library accessible to the public and housed outside the University building. Education in all its stages was under the control of the University in those days and the Commissioners hit upon the idea of incorporating the Government Library in Valletta with the educational establishments making up the University of Malta. This idea was not quite new, for Napoleon's Order of the 18th June 1798 had likewise provided for the attachment of the Government Library to the *École Centrale* that was to replace the University.[1] However, Napoleon's decree had never been put into practice, and the Commissioners' recommendation in 1838 gave rise to an interesting experiment in library administration whose failure was due more to weakness in executing the educational reforms contemplated in other fields than to any defect inherent in the conception of the idea itself.

The state of the Malta University in 1836 is thus summarised by the Commissioners in their Report:

> The University of Valletta was placed on its present footing in 1834, according to a plan sent by Sir Frederick Ponsonby, in a despatch of the 23rd October 1833, and approved of by Lord Stanley (the Secretary of State for the Colonies) in a despatch of the 20th of November following.
>
> The teachers in the University of Valletta consist of Professors in the four Faculties of Theology, Law, Medicine and Philosophy or Arts. The government of it resides in a Rector, who, in certain cases, is assisted by a Council.
>
> The complete academical course lasts six years. The three first years are given to instruction in philosophy: the three last, to instruction in theology, law or medicine. Students are admitted once only in every three years; that is to say, they are only admitted in the year in which the triennial course of philosophy begins. The number of the students admitted for the last triennial course was 159. The number of the students now attending the different classes is 130. The number of the

[1] Scicluna, H.P., *Actes et Documents pour servir a l'Histoire de l'Occupation Française de Malte pendant les années* 1798-1800, Malta, 1923, p. 99.

students now attending each class, together with other details, will be found in the second Appendix to the present Report. It will be seen from that Appendix that the attendance in some of the classes is extremely irregular.[2]

Since 1834 the University Council had initiated a policy of book acquisition for the benefit of students. The Minutes of the meeting held on the 26th June 1834 record how the Council resolved that 'in order to provide the newly-created Library of the University, which was still in its beginnings, with useful works for the students, steps be taken to purchase the work entitled *Storia Ecclesiastica*, by Orsi, at the price of 45 *scudi*.[3] On the 11th March 1835 Council authorised the purchase of a book-case that was available for sale at the Public Library for the sum of about 25 *scudi*, to be used in the newly-formed University Libraty.[4] A decision by Council on the 10th September 1835 empowered the Rector to select and acquire for the University Library certain books, especially classics, up to a sum of 50 *scudi*,[5] while on the 15th January 1836 the Rector was authorised to purchase up to £2 worth of law books.[6]

The Commissioners thus found already existing an active University Library policy which by the end of 1838 had resulted in the acquisition of 414 volumes – an appreciable number for those days. Messrs Austin and Lewis were, no doubt, aware of this; at the same time, they could not but observe that at a short distance from the University lay the Government Library, dating from the days of the Order and containing precious manuscripts, besides ancient tomes the majority of which had been passed over to it as part of the spoils of deceased Knights, but otherwise unprovided with funds and therefore unable to meet the demands of the times and fulfil its function as a public library. Here was the splendid opportunity, the Commissioners must have thought, for ensuring the continued existence of the Library of the Knights, enhancing its prestige by converting it into a University Library with adequate safeguards for public access to it. That the recommendation to incorporate the Library into the University Establishment did not emanate from the University but came spontaneously from the Commissioners themselves is indicated by the fact that the plan approved by Lord Stanley in 1833 which, in the words

[2] *Copies or Extracts of Reports of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Affairs of Malta*, Part II, 1838, p. 38.
[3] Royal University of Malta Archives (RUM Arch.): *Consiglio Generale* 1828-39; *Atti e Deliberazioni prese in Consiglio dagli Illustrissimi Signori incaricati del regime di questa R. Università di Malta*; Minutes of meeting held on 26th June 1834.
[4] *Ibid* – Minutes of meeting held on 11th March, 1835.
[5] *Ibid* – Minutes of meeting held on 10th September, 1835.
[6] *Ibid* – Minutes of meeting held on 15th January, 1835.

of Austin and Lewis, was 'an authority for the plan which we have prepared' in no way included any recommendation regarding the Government Library.

At the same time one cannot exclude the possibility that the idea could have originated as a personal suggestion from Canon Emmanuele Rossignaud, the Rector, whose suggestions, sent to the Commissioners, were considered judicious and sound and became 'the basis of the reforms in the University and Lyceum' submitted by the Commissioners. This hypothesis gains added weight in the light of the direct interest subsequently shown by the Rector in the success of this Library experiment.

In order to provide funds for the proposed University Library, Messrs Austin and Lewis recommended a yearly book vote of £100 out of Government funds, in addition to one third of the University fees and all the fees paid for degrees. The relevant extract reads as follows:

> In our opinion the Government Library (which is now managed by a separate Committee) should be deemed the Library of the University and Lyceum and placed under the control of the Rector. We think, however, that the public should have access to it, and that books should be allowed to be taken out of it, according to the existing rules.
>
> The Government Library has no funds, excepting an endowment of 20*l.* a year. We recommend, therefore, that one-third of the monthly fees paid to the University and Lyceum, with all the fees paid for degrees, shall be applied to the purchase and binding of books for the University Library, and to the purchase of anatomical and other instruments to be used by the lecturers and teachers in the University and Lyceum. We recommend, further that 100 *l.* a year shall be granted by the Government for the same purposes.[7]

The Fundamental Statute

The University reforms advocated by the Commissioners were soon implemented. A Minute by His Excellency the Governor, dated the 20th Aug. 1838, and issued on receipt of 'the orders of Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonial Department to proceed to the revision of the existing Establishments for Public Instruction, on the principles laid down in a Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Enquiry, as far as may be practicable and consistent with a due regard for other demands on the Revenues of the Local Government', gave 'an outline of the reorganisation of the University and Lyceum, which will come into operation on the first day of January 1839'. The new arrangement provided, *inter alia*,

[7] *Copies or Extracts of Reports of the Commissioners...* Part II, 1838, p. 41.

for a Special Council, or Faculty Board, in respect of each of the four Faculties of the University, and for a General Council composed of the Rector and representatives of the Special Councils, such Councils to be created following the approval of a Fundamental Statute made by the authority of the Governor 'determining the government and management of the University and Lyceum'. Para 9 of the Governor's Minute stated: 'The Government Library will be deemed the Library of the University, and be placed under the control of the Rector; the public having access to it, and books being allowed to be taken out of it according to the existing rules.'[8]

On the 15th December 1838 the *Fundamental Statute of the University of Malta* was published by Governor Bouverie 'under the Seal of the Government of the Island of Malta and its Dependencies'. The new Statute, which was the work of Sir Gavinus Ignatius Bonavita,[9] was made up of 173 articles, of which the following, having a direct or indirect bearing on the University Library, are here reproduced:

§ I

OF THE GENERAL PLAN AND GENERAL ORGANISATION OF THE UNIVERSITY AND LYCEUM

Art. I. The Administration of the University and Lyceum shall be entrusted to the Rector. The Government Library, the Botanic Garden and the Theatre of Anatomy, shall be annexed to the University of which they shall form part and, under the dispositions of this Statute, the general terms of establishment, or University, shall include the Library, the Botanic Garden, and the Theatre of Anatomy, as far as such dispositions may be applicable thereto, although they may not be expressly mentioned therein.

§ II

OF THE RECTOR

Art. 7. The Rector shall be the Head of the University and Lyceum; and in this capacity it shall be his general duty to attend to the strict observance of the rules of the establishment, to the discipline and good conduct of the students, to the due subordination of all the persons employed, and to the exact performance on their part of their duties, for which purpose he must keep himself informed of the attention shewn by them on this head; – he must make known to whom it may concern all superior orders

[8] *Ordinances and other Official Acts...* 1836-1841. Malta, 1843, p. 111

[9] Laferla, A.V. *British Malta.* Vol. I, 1938, p. 170, Footnote 2.

relative to the establishment, and cause them to be carried into effect, – point out to Government the wants of the establishment, in order that they may be provided for, – and be vigiliant that everything concurs to render the University and Lyceum really useful and worthy of the public confidence.

...omissis...

Art, 10. For the performance of the duties contemplated in Art. 7, as far as the same relate to the Government Library, the Rector shall be invested with all the powers which, in virtue of the Government Notice of the 4th of March, 1831, of the fundamental laws, and of the regulations relative to the circulation of the books of that Library, were entrusted to the Permanent Committee established by such notice. But the power vested in the Committee of depriving persons of the benefit of the Library cannot be exercised by the Rector, except after a report has been made by him to the Head of the Government, and after orders or instructions from the latter expressly authorizing such privation. Nevertheless in other cases in which such powers are modified by this Statute, the Rector shall conform to the same.

...omissis...

§ XIII

OF THE LIBRARY

Art. 83. The Government Library shall be considered as the library of the University, and continue to be subject to the laws and regulations hitherto in force in regard to the same, with the exception of what is set forth in Art. 10 of this statute.

Art. 84. The actual library of the University shall be incorporated with the Government Library, wherein the books of the former shall be deposited and inserted in the catalogue of the latter.

Art. 85. The librarian shall be responsible to Government for the preservation and good condition of the books of the library; and shall furnish all the professors and preceptors with such books as they may require for the public service, upon a requisition made in writing by the professor or preceptor. On the restitution of the books the requisition shall be restored by the librarian.

Art. 86. No book given out, either to the Rector or to the professors, can be transferred into other hands, or be used for other purposes than the service of the University or Lyceum.

Art. 87. At the end of every month, the librarian shall send to the Rector a note of the books which, in terms of Art. 85, have been issued to the professors or preceptors; and it shall be the duty of the Rector to see to their restitution, after the required use has been made of them.

Art. 88. The librarian during the times fixed for instruction at the University and Lyceum, shall keep himself in readiness to attend to the requisitions which, in terms of Art. 85, may be made to him.

Art. 89. It shall be the duty of the librarian to note in a book to be kept for such purpose, and to be exposed for the inspection of any one on a table in the library, the titles of any works or publications of which he may think the acquisition useful for the library.

The Rector, professors and preceptors shall in like manner note in such book any work relative to the particular studies in the University and Lyceum, the purchase of which they may be desirous of proposing.

The registry of books proposed for purchase shall be submitted to the General Council by the Rector at each quarterly meeting; and the General Council shall examine the same, and approve or reject any of the proposed works, as it may think expedient, and make such selection of the proposed works for the purchase of the same as the funds of the library will allow, keeping in view the enriching of the library, not only in works on the arts and sciences most immediately adapted to the students, but also in works of general literature, for the benefit of the public.

Art. 90. Besides the reports which it may be necessary for the librarian to make on particular occasions, he must, towards the end of every year, make the written report to the Rector which is indicated in Art. 5 of the fundamental laws of the library, in order that the Rector, in making the report ordered in Art. 16 of this statute, may include the subject of the library.

Art. 91. The duties of the Treasurer of the library shall devolve on the Procurator of the University, under the regulations established in Art. 80.

In January, 1839 the above arrangements were implemented; the volumes that had accumulated in the University during the previous five years, 414 in number, were deposited in the Government Library which thenceforth became known as the University Library.[10] This phase in the history

[10] Vide Canon Rossignaud's Report for 1839 read to the Council on the 11th September 1839 and included in RUM Arch. *Letter Book* 1836-9. The figure of 414 volumes given by the Rector in reality represented 103 works roughly classified as follows: Theology 5, Law 10, Medicine (including Physics, Chemistry and Botany) 63, Philosophy (including Mathematics) 5, Belles Letters 20. For details

of the Royal Malta Library has been scarcely touched upon by its historians[11] and the following notes, based on the official Letter Books of the period preserved in the University Archives, as well as on the Minute Books of the University Council, will throw fresh light on a hitherto obscure period in the history of both institutions.

Staff and Finance

On the 17th December 1838 the Chief Secretary to Government transmitted to the Rector the Provisional Fixed Establishment of the University as from the 1st January 1839. The Library Establishment was made up as follows:

NAME	SITUATION	ANNUAL SALARY
Dr. Cesare Vassallo	Librarian	£125. 0*s.* 0*d.*
Paolo Falzon	Deliverer of books	£ 40. 0*s.* 0*d*
Giuseppe Ellul	Porter	£ 20. 0*s.* 0*d.*

The post of Watchman (*Guardiano della Libreria*), which had been filled by Rosario Bonett since 1806, was suppressed when the Library was incorporated with the University.[12]

According to the statement of accounts by the Procurator of the University (and Lyceum), during the first year of the new arrangement the sum of £133. 18*s.* 6*d.* was spent on books. At the same time, the following funds were available for the new University Library[13] between the 1st January and the 31st December 1839:

of authors, titles and number of volumes see the *Nota di Libri ricevuti nella Biblioteca della Università, inviati dal Revmo. Sigr. Dr. Orazio Borg, Procuratore dell'Università degli Studi, il 7 Gennaio 1839*, signed by the Librarian, Dr. Cesare Vassallo, on the 28th January 1939 (RUM Arch: *Conti* 1839-41).

[11] Caruana, A.A., *The Royal Public Library of Malta*, Malta, 1898; Leopardi, E.R., *Il-Bibljoteka Nazzjonali ta' Malta* (1555-1955), Malta, 1955. Caruana (p. 8) merely observes: 'In 1839 the Library was annexed to the University... About two years later the Establishment of the Public Library was again separated from that of the University.'

[12] RUM Arch: *Government Letters* 1839-1841 – Provisional Fixed Establishment of the University from the 1st January 1839 issued from the Chief Secretary's Office on 17th December 1838; also RUM Arch: *Letter Book* 1836-9.

[13] RUM Arch: *Government Letters* 1839-41 – Abstract of the Accounts of the Procurator of the University and Lyceum of Malta from the 1st January to the 31st December 1839. This Abstract was audited and approved on the 6th May 1840.

Fees on academical degrees	£160.	0*s.*	0*d.*
Funds received over from the Library 1st January on its incorporation with the University and Lyceum	80	4	10¾
Interest of a capital belonging to the Library in the ancient *Massa Frumentaria*[14]	43	6	8
Sale of superflous books belonging to the Library	43	2	4¼
Subscriptions for the circulation of books from the Library[15]	5	15	0
Total	£309.	8	11

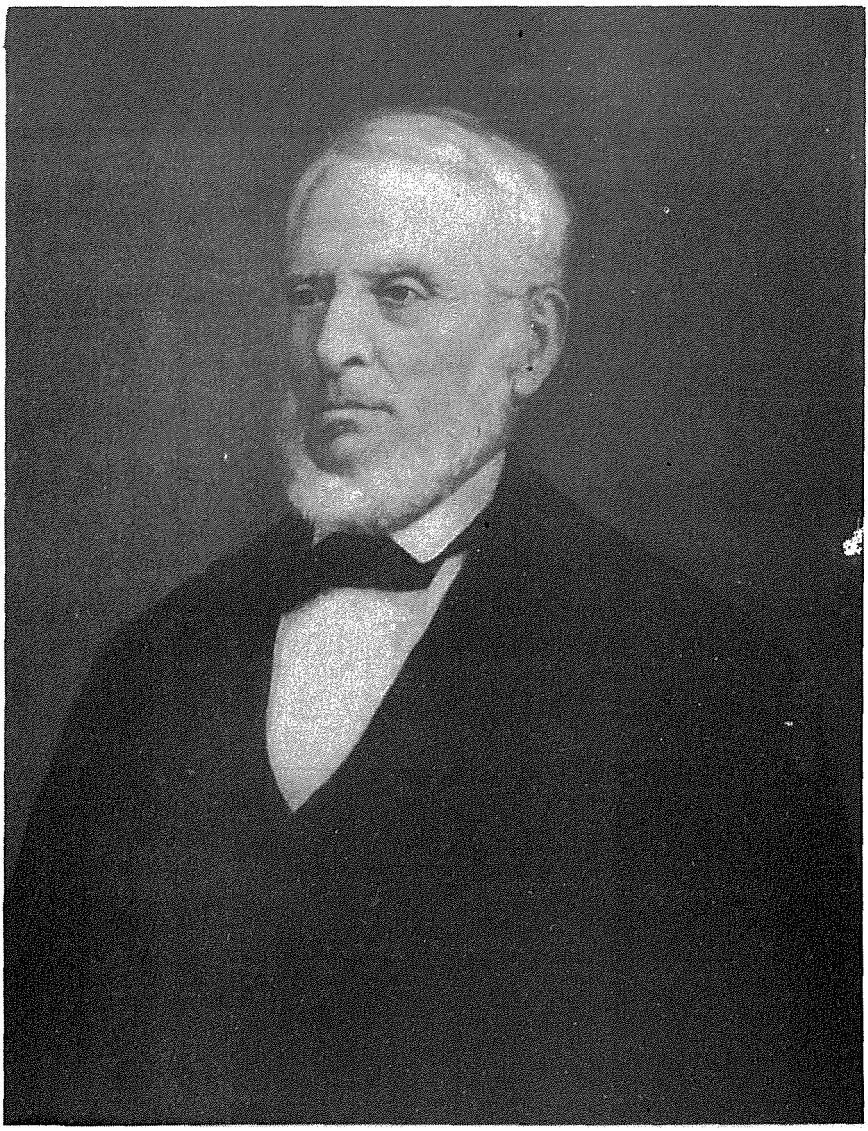
Summarizing the above, Personal Emoluments amounted to £185; Other Charges to £309. 8*s.* 11*d.* The Expenses in respect of book purchases totalled £133. 18*s.* 6*d.* The Commissioners' recommendation to apply one-third of University fees to book purchases, etc. was not acted upon. This would have amounted to approximately £70.

Library Hours

This subject was among the first that engaged the attention of the University Authorities. If the University Library was to function properly, it was necessary for its time-table to be adjusted to University life. The hours of opening in 1839 were neither suitable for students and Teaching Staff nor beneficial to the public at large, for the Library was kept open from 9 to noon, then closed for two hours and again opened from 2 to 4 p.m. In this manner, as pointed out by the Rector in his letter to Government dated 5th April 1839, 'the public is deprived of the benefit of frequenting the Library during the hours that are most suitable for study . . . in as much as the University is then open, the Government Offices and Courts are also in business at the time'. The existing time-table, which was a relic of the old practice of closing down all business at noon, when everybody went home for lunch and had a brief siesta till 2 or 3 p.m., in effect

[14] On the 31st August 1782, Fr Gaetano Bruno, a Maltese member of the Order, bequeathed a donation of a capital of 10,000 Maltese *scudi* which was invested at two and a half per cent in the *Massa Frumentaria*, the interest to be spent in the purchase of books for the Library, Vide Caruana (op. cit., p. 5).

[15] A charge of 8*s.* 4*d.* for the loan of books, payable in advance every six months, was first included in the *Regolamenti per la circolazione de' Libri della Real Biblioteca di Malta*, published in 1806, Vide Leopardi, E.R., op. cit., p. 10.



Reproduced from an oil painting by courtesy of the Librarian, Royal Malta Library

DR. CESARE VASSALLO
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN 1839-1842

meant that 'the Library is practically useless; nay, with great inconvenience it is closed during those hours when it should be kept open, and accessible at hours when very few can frequent it'. The Rector suggested that the time-table be changed, the Library to be kept open uninterruptedly from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.[16] On the following day (6th April 1839), the Chief Secretary to Government informed the Rector 'that His Excellency the Governor approved of the proposed change as to the hours in which the University Library should be kept open and accessible to the public'.[17] Having received Government approval, the Rector, Canon Rossignaud, immediately sent instructions to the Librarian to adhere to the new time-table as from the following Monday and to display a notice to that effect in the Library.[18] Reading the whole correspondence on this matter one gets the feeling that the suggestion to alter the existing time-table came directly from the Rector and was not made at the instance of the Librarian.

Book Selection

University policy on this important item of library administration was ably synthesised by the Rector in his introductory speech at the meeting of the General Council held on the 12th April 1839. Canon Rossignaud stated that 'although the Library was stocked with many good, elegant and classic works, especially in the Ecclesiastical sciences, in the Arts and in Drawing, it was however lacking in a good collection of various modern works in practically all the branches of Science and Literature'.

In presenting to Council the Suggestions Book required by Section 89 of the Statute, the Rector further explained his views on book selection. He would recommend that only those important works should be selected for purchase that were well established and were, besides, useful to those interested in Letters, the Arts and the Sciences. Above all the Rector stressed that first preference should be given to the acquisition of literary works in English and Italian 'especially now that the new organisation (of the University) presents us with two schools in these fields (i.e. the University and the Lyceum)'. English books were expensive, and quite beyond the means of the students; hence also the importance of helping them by providing such books in the University Library.[19]

A perusal of the list of books approved for purchase by the University

[16] RUM Arch: *Letter Book* 1836-9.
[17] RUM Arch: *Government Letters* 1839-41.
[18] RUM Arch: *Letter Book 1836-9* – letter dated 6th April 1839.
[19] RUM Arch: *Consiglio Generale* 1838-40 – Minutes of Meeting held on 12th April 1839.

Council between 1839 and 1841[20] shows that book selection was purposeful and inclined more towards Law, Science and Medicine than towards Literature. It does not appear from the minutes of the University Council whether this was due to the fact that the Librarian, or the Professors, did not make enough suggestions for books in the fields of English and Italian Literature, or because the University Council rejected such suggestions, if any.

Among the 147 volumes acquired for the University Library in its first year, i.e. during 1839, we find the set of the French journal *Moniteur* from 1789 to 1835, in 99 volumes, besides the *Histoire Naturelle Generale* by Buffon, Lacépède and Cuvier (Paris, 1831-2) in 42 volumes containing 363 plates, and Cesari's *Vita di Gesù Cristo* and *Atti degli Apostoli* (Firenze, 1832) in 16 volumes.

Of the above, the *Moniteur* was purchased at the express order of the Governor 'for the sum of eighty four pounds sterling'. It was purchased from Sir John Stoddard, President of the High Court of Appeal.[21] Its importance as a source for the history of the period was emphasized by the Rector in his speech before the University Council on the 12th April 1839 when he said: *"Un opera assai commendevole ed importante si è ultimamente acquistata: quest'è il Monitore Francese, la cui importanza nel vasto campo dello studio sulla Storia dei nostri tempi nessun v'ha chi ignori'*[22].

Carmignani's works on Criminal Law were almost certainly recommended by Professor Dr Ferdinand Caruana Dingli, who held the Chair of Criminal Law from 1835 to 1869. He was a devoted student of the learned professor from Pisa and besides translating for the first time in Italian and publishing in Malta Carmignani's *Elementi del Diritto Criminale* (1847), Caruana Dingli also wrote a biography of Carmignani, which he read publicly on the 16th November 1847 and subsequently published locally in the same year.[23]

Periodicals

Periodicals also engaged the attention of the Rector and Council as well as of the Librarian. On the 11th May 1839 it was decided that the University Library should subscribe to some of the most modern and accredited journals on Law and Medicine.[24] On the 27th November 1840 the

[20] Vide list of books appended to this article (p. 80 sqq).
[21] RUM Arch: *Government Letters* 1839-41 – letter dated 12th January 1839.
[22] RUM Arch: *Consiglio Generale* 1838-40 – Minutes of meeting held on 12th April 1839.
[23] Schembri, A., *Selva di autori e traduttori maltesi...*, Malta, 1855, p. 24.
[24] RUM Arch: *Consiglio Generale* 1824-39 – Minutes of meeting held on 11th May 1839.

Rector informed the Council that various scientific journals were being published, containing information about recent discoveries and advances in learning. Subscription to these periodicals would, he added, be extremely useful for Malta. Council agreed to this[25].

In his report for 1839 the Rector fully endorsed Dr Cesare Vassallo's recommendation that the Library should subscribe to literary and scientific journals published in Italian, English and French.[26] The Librarian showed a keen awareness of the trend of the times in making this recommendation. He was no doubt aware that in the Garrison Library, which was then housed in the same building as the University (Government) Library, there were journals and periodicals of all kinds. Indeed, the *Classified Catalogue of the Malta Garrison Library*, printed at the Mission Press in Malta in 1840, gave the titles of 20 historical, literary and scientific reviews, magazines or journals that were currently received at the Garrison Library, besides a list of 32 other periodicals that were either no longer published, or had been discontinued.

The recognition of the value of learned journals and periodicals in any library, let alone a University Library, shows that the Library policy of the University, as shaped by the Rector on the advice of the Librarian, was the right one.

Donations

Donations of books were practically non-existent during the period under review. One outstanding donor, however, was Sir John Hookham Frere who for several years up to 1833 had been President of the Council of the University, and who had been a member of the Permanent Committee of the Government Library between 1831 and 1838. On the 26th April 1840 the Librarian informed the Rector that Frere had presented the two volumes of the translations of *Aristophanes' Tragedy* to the Library, and suggested that they should not be bound in one volume. This suggestion was approved by the Rector on the 30th May[27]. Frere had already proved a generous donor to the University Library, for before his retirement from the Presidency of the Council, he had presented a £100 worth of carefully selected medical works, mostly in English. His purpose was to see the Medical School prosper and he autographed each book with the following motto: *In usum iuventutis Medicae Artis Studiosae dedit Joannes Hookham Frere.*[28]

[25] RUM Arch: *Consiglio Generale* 1840-73 – Minutes of meeting held on 27th November 1840.
[26] Vide Rector's Report for 1839, already quoted in 10.
[27] RUM Arch: *Letter Book* 1839-41.
[28] Clinquant, Dr G., *Biografia del Molt'Onorabile John Hookham Frere morto in Malta il 7 Gennaio del 1846...* Malta, p. 6.

The Catalogue

The need for an up-to-date catalogue of books in the Library was felt long before it passed under the control of the University. An index in five volumes, in folio, was available, but this fell far short of what a catalogue should be and gave no indication of the Library holdings in the various subject fields.

To offset the lack of a proper catalogue, and presumably also to mitigate somewhat the disadvantages of fixed location, the Government Library in 1832 published a *Catalogue of Books for Circulation.* This Catalogue gave simplified entries, containing author, title, date and number of volumes, of a selection of books available for circulation in the Government Library. The books were listed alphabetically under six broad classes: History, Belles Lettres, Arts and Sciences, Medicine, Jurisprudence and Theology. A glance at this catalogue suffices to show that the vast majority of books had been published before 1800. Out of 1,155 works entered under History, only eight bear a Nineteenth Century date. For the other classes the figures are as follows: Belles Lettres 1,820 works (4), Arts and Sciences 740 works (4), Medicine 340 works (9), Jurisprudence 534 (2), Theology 252 works (1). This lack of a steady flow of new acquisitions, coupled with the fact that many of the older books were hardly suitable to meet the needs of a public struggling to find its feet for the first time on the uncertain ground of a newly found freedom of the Press and of an experiment in public education, may have contributed towards the progressive decrease in the number of registered borrowers who in 1839 had dwindled down to 14 and showed signs of diminishing still further in 1840.[29]

Canon Rossignaud emphasized the need of a *catalogue raisonné* in his annual report for 1839. His recommendations on this point may be summarised as follows:

(i) The Catalogue should contain annotations relating to the merits of the author, the subjects covered, the author's method and the quality of the edition.

(ii) A work on such lines had been compiled by the Canonico Francesco Strano and published for the Ventimiliana Library of Catania, of which there was a copy in the Library;

(iii) The Catalogue that the Librarian, Dr Vassallo, had been compiling for some years did not depart unduly from the method, etc. followed in Strano's Catalogue:

(iv) Library books included in Strano's Catalogue should have their

[29] Vide Rector's Report for 1839, already quoted in 10.

Catalogue entry copied on to the Malta Catalogue; the others to be described on the same method, basing the description on reviews in scientific and literary journals.

(v) The University Professors should, if need be, help with advice in the compilation of such a Catalogue.

(vi) A bibliographical description was not enough; at the most it could only show the quality of an edition, but it could not bring out the subject coverage and assess its merits – which was what the public wanted and what really interested the students of the University.

(vii) As the Librarian had already prepared a sort of card catalogue covering one-third of the books in the Library, each entry containing the author's name, title of work, printer's name and a bibliographical note, it was desirable that a start be made with those entries falling under the letter A to compile the Catalogue.[30]

In the following year, the Rector was able to report that a general index, in three volumes, covering all works in the Library had been compiled by the Librarian, arranged in alphabetical order, and showing the format, number of volumes and their fixed location on the shelves.[31]

The *Catalogue Raisonné* took some years to complete. It was eventually published by Government in 4 volumes in 1843-4 under the title *Catalogo dei libri esistenti nella Pubblica Biblioteca di Malta, compilato per ordine di materie.* Vol. I dealt with Belles Lettres (188 pp.), Vol. II with Arts and Sciences including Medicine (208 pp.), Vol. III covered Theology and Jurisprudence (164 pp.) and Vol. IV dealt with History (334 pp.). By that time, however, the Library had passed out of the control of the University and reverted to the management of a Committee.

Strano's *Catalogo Ragionato della Biblioteca Ventimilliana esistente nella Regia Università degli Studi di Catania* (1830) is still preserved at the Royal Malta Library. Comparing the entries in this catalogue with those contained in the four volumes of Vassallo's *Catalogo*, one can see that Vassallo did not follow Canon Rossignaud's suggestion to copy Strano's entries in respect of books held in common in both libraries. Vassallo's annotations are shorter and more to the point; and in refraining from an indiscriminate, often superfluous use of annotations, Vassallo seems to have kept in mind the maxim generally accepted in modern times that the primary function of the library annotator is to avoid personal bias and to elucidate rather than to evaluate and appraise. Hence we find that

[30] Ibid.

[31] Vide Rector's Report for the Scholastic Year 1839-40, dated 13th October 1840 and read to the Council on the 25th October, included in RUM Arch: *Letter Book* 1839-42.

the annotations he introduced so judiciously in his catalogue are often as valid today as they were a century ago. This Catalogue is the outstanding achievement of Cesare Vassallo and provides perhaps the best example of a printed catalogue in Malta.[32]

Apart from the support given to the Librarian by the University in the compilation of the Catalogue, Government embraced the idea to the extent of writing officially to the Rector on the 3rd January 1840 informing him that 'the librarian being engaged under the orders of Government in preparing a *Catalogue Raisonné* of the works existing in the Library, attention is to be paid to such requisitions as he may make from time to time for the necessary supply of stationery'.[33]

Books required by Professors and Preceptors

Art. 85 of the Statute laid down that 'the Librarian . . . shall furnish all the professors and preceptors with such books as they may require for the public service . . .' while Art. 86 stated that 'no book given out, either to the Rector or to the professors, can be transferred into other hands, or be used for other purposes than the service of the University or Lyceum'.

A too literal interpretation of these articles by the Librarian resulted in a misunderstanding which led to a sharp letter by the Rector. The Librarian apparently held the view that Professors should specifically state the uses for which the books borrowed were required and that they should limit themselves to books immediately bearing on their subjects. On the 15th June 1840 the Rector informed the Librarian that Art. 86 should be interpreted liberally in the sense that any professor may ask for those books which he deemed necessary for his purpose and without any obligation on his part of explaining to the Librarian in detail the use which he intended to make of such books. The letter emphasized that neither the Rector nor the Librarian was in duty bound to inquire into the purpose of a requisition for books, as the sciences tended to overlap, and any interference on this point would hinder the diffusion of learning in the spirit contemplated by the Statute.[34]

Vassallo also objected to the application of the facilities offered to Professors in the case of unprofessional members of the Faculty Boards, i.e. three members for each Special Council, named by the Head of the Government, who acted as Examiners, not being Professors employed in University. On the 23rd January, 1841 Rossignaud referred the matter to

[32] Vassallo's Classed Catalogue was arranged on the system of the Jesuit F. Garnier as improved by M. Martin. Vide Varuana, op. cit., p. 10.
[33] RUM Arch: *Government Letters* 1839-41.
[34] RUM Arch: *Letter Book* 1839-42.

Government for a decision. The reply which reached the Rector on the following day read as follows:

Chief Secretary's Office,
Valletta, 26th January, 1841.

Sir,

Having laid before the Governor your letter of the 23rd instant and the submitted extract of the Minutes of the General Council at the sitting held on the 31st March last, bearing the unanimous resolution that the provision of Art. 85 of the Fundamental Statute under which the Librarian is authorised to give out books to the Professors, etc. be extended to the unprofessional members of the Special Councils of the various faculties, I am directed to convey to you His Excellency's approval of that Resolution.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient humble servant.

(sd.) H. GREIG
Chief Secretary to Government

To The Rev. Canon Dr. E. Rossignaud,
Rector of the University.[35]

On the 27th the Rector informed the Librarian of Government's decision and enclosed the following list of unprofessional members of the Special Councils:

Faculty of Theology: Archpriest Dr. D. Giuseppe Galea, Parish Priest Dr. D. Luigi Fernandes, Rev. Dr. D. Emmanuele Speranza; *Faculty of Laws:* Magistrate Dr. Salvatore Cecy, Judge Dr. Francesco Naudi, Advocate Dr. Francesco Hyzler; *Faculty of Medicine:* Dr. Giuseppe Maria Stilon, Dr. Luigi Gravagna, Dr. Tommaso Chetcuti; *Faculty of Philosophy:* Rev. Dr. D. Vincenzo Paolo Galea, Rev. Dr. D. Pietro Paolo Pullicino.[36]

Change in Rectorship and Repeal of Library Provisions

From the very start of the new arrangements, Canon Rossignaud, the Rector, had taken a great interest in the Library; he certainly showed

[35] RUM Arch: *Government Letters* 1839-41.
[36] RUM Arch: *Letter Book* 1839-42.

an awareness of the needs of the students and of the general public as well as a sure sense of direction in formulating the library policy of the University General Council. One can surmise that, had he continued in the Rectorship, the Library experiment we are writing about would not have come to such an untimely end. But higher policy demanded his removal from the post of Rector and as a result the Library lost its strongest advocate. The events of this obscure period in the history of the University of Malta may be briefly summarised here to give the right background for an appreciation of the circumstances that eventually led to a complete reversal of Library policy by Government.

Bouverie had early dissented from the Commissioners' recommendation to entrust the whole governance of education to the Rector.[37] For some years the affairs of the University of Malta had given a good deal of annoyance to the Government and it was that circumstance that prompted them to try to put an end to it by bringing out an Englishman to be Rector.

On the 3rd August 1841 the Governor sent a Despatch to Lord John Russell stating that '. . . the University has hitherto proved a failure, on account of the want of efficient management in the rector (the Canonico Rossignaud) who held the rectorship under the former system, and was continued in his office, being considered by Her Majesty's Commissioners and myself the fittest man to be found at the time, but who, although a highly respectable ecclesiastic, has nevertheless proved to be deficient in those qualifications which enable a man to control a body of professors, and to organise a system of teaching not only for the University, but for the Lyceum and the normal and primary schools'. In his reply of the 27th August 1841 Lord Russell agreed that 'rather than allow that institution (the University) to remain in an inefficient state, Her Majesty's Government will sanction the grant. . . of an allowance of 100 *l.* a year for three years to Dr. Rossignaud, on the understanding that the allowance shall cease whenever, within that period, he may be appointed to a benefice'. This arrangement enabled the Rector to retire[38] and on the 17th November

[37] Laferla, A.V., *British Malta.* Vol. I, 1938, p. 170.

[38] In 1843 the British Government recommended Canon Rossignaud for appointment as Coadjutor or successor to Archbishop Caruana. However, as Rossignaud had been deprived of the Rectorship owing to his 'want of efficient management' and Bouverie's Despatch had been published as a Parliamentary Paper by order of the House of Commons (vide 39 below), the Holy See intimated that Mgr. Publius Maria dei Conti Sant was the person it wished to appoint Coadjutor. The appointment was eventually made in 1847. In 1854 Rossignaud's name was again put forward when the question of appointing a Coadjutor to Archbishop Sant arose. Quoting Laferla on the subject: '(Governor) Reid liked Canon Rossignaud – England's ex-nominee – and wished to revive his claim. It will be remembered that the British Government had to give way when faced by the argument that a person

of the same year the Rev. Thaddaeus O'Malley arrived in Malta and immediately assumed the duties of Rector.

O'Malley's appointment followed a series of conversations in London in the summer of 1841 between Governor Bouverie and Mr. George Cornewall Lewis, one of the Commissioners of 1836, who had suggested that O'Malley might be tried for the rectorship after satisfying himself 'that the University was in an unsatisfactory state, and that this state was in great measure owing to the character of the existing rector, a Maltese ecclesiastic who, although a perfectly respectable man and free from all positive objection, nevertheless did not possess the vigour and practical ability which were requisite for remodelling the University upon the extended plan recommended by the Commissioners'.

As soon as O'Malley entered upon his office in November 1841 'the fullest support was given to his authority by the suspension of the meetings of the Councils, a measure which placed the entire government of the University in his hands'. The new Rector, however, was a complete failure and before many months had passed the Governor by despatch dated 15th July 1842 informed the Colonial Secretary, Lord Stanley, that following 'the opinion formed by Mr. Lewis of the unfitness of the Rev. O'Malley for the office of rector of this University', he had signified to Rev. O'Malley that he was expected to retire. Mr. Lewis wrote at length on Rev. O'Malley's unfitness in his letter to the Colonial Secretary dated 4th October 1842. He stated: 'Since Rev. O'Malley has entered upon his office, he has not, as far as I know, done anything to improve the condition of the University; he has introduced no actual change in its constitution or management, and has not even made any suggestion with respect to either which can be considered as useful. Far from contributing any original advice which could assist the local government through their difficulties, he adopted a plan of studies which had been prepared before

who had proved unfit as the Rector of the Malta University was certainly unfit to be the head of the Diocese and Reid wished to blunt the edges of this argument by appointing Dr. Rossignaud Rector of the University on the retirement of Mr. Butt in 1854. He took the first step by making him acting Rector but the Secretary of State did not approve Reid's proposal and Dr. Saverio Schembri was placed at the head of the University. Before this happened, however, Reid egged on by Canon Rossignaud, was already in private correspondence with Mr. Lyons in Rome. His strong objection was to Canon Amato who, 'udging by his violent speeches as a member of the Council of Government, was ill-affected towards the British Government. Rome, however, had no intention of appointing him or any other Canon and proposed Father Gaetano Pace Forno, a very worthy and much respected Augustinian Friar whose name had never been mixed up with parties and disputes, either lay or ecclesiastical. Her Majesty's Government immediately assented' Laferla, op. cit., pp. 228-9; also 180, 188.

he entered the Island, altogether unsuited to the modest character of the University, and implying a total misconception of the wants and circumstances of the place. Instead of making a report upon the state of the University, as he had been required by the Government to do, he published this plan, with an announcement, which he had no authority for making, that it would be carried into execution in October following. He has done nothing to bring forward or encourage any person capable of benefiting the University. He has not been able to conciliate support, to inspire confidence, to reconcile existing differences, or to give stability or consistency to the system of studies. The University is now in a state of greater confusion than it was when he undertook the management of it; and the difficulty of settling it satisfactorily has been increased by his injudicious and unintelligible proceedings . . . A native of Malta is preferable, on many and obvious grounds, for the office of rector. His knowledge of the opinion and manners of the people, of the characters of individuals, and of the written and spoken languages gives him advantages which no foreigner can possess. Nothing would, in my opinion, justify the appointment of an Englishman to that office but his pre-eminent prudence, practical ability, and powers of organization and management, I regret to say, that Rev. O'Malley does not compensate for his necessary deficiencies by any superiority to his predecessor in the qualities last mentioned . . . On the whole, I think decidely that the experiment of Rev. O'Malley's appointment has failed, and that the Government would not be justified in allowing him to return to Malta as Rector. I regret to say, that I should consider his resumption of the office as a serious calamity to the Island'. On the 21st October 1842 the Rev. T. O'Malley was informed that his employment as Rector of the University had ceased.[39] He was succeeded in the Rectorship by Dr. P.P. Psaila.

In these circumstances the Library ceased to play an important role in the deliberations of the Council. The last meeting at which books were selected was that held on the 7th July 1841. On the 3rd September, the Suggestions Book was presented to Council as usual, but no selection was made. Then on the 5th October 1841 the Rector was informed that as the Statute, together with other plans, was under revision in London and as the new Rector would arrive in the course of four or five weeks, it seemed fitting to the Officer administering the Government to relieve the Council from the further prosecution of the new plan so as to save them unnecessary trouble.[40] Upon this, the Council meeting due to be held on

[39] *Papers relating to the Removal of the Rev. Mr O'Malley from the Office of Rector of the University of Malta* 1843, pp. 35. (Parliamentary Paper 567 ordered by the House of Commons to be printed).
[40] RUM Arch: *Government Letters* 1839-41.

the 11th October did not take place, and in fact no further Council meetings were held until the 3rd December 1842, by which time O'Malley too had been forced to resign from the Rectorship.[41]

On the 30th December 1842 a Government Notice was published whereby the provisions of the Statute regarding the administration and superintendence of the Library were repealed. The Notice declared that the administering powers etc. hitherto vested in the Rector in terms of the Statute were, as from that date, to pass to a Committee of which the Rector *pro tempore* and the Librarian *pro tempore* were to be members.[42]

These events undoubtedly precipitated the cancellation of the arrangement proposed by the Commissioners. One must say, however, that there were some inherent defects in the practical execution of the plan. For one thing it left little room for initiative on the part of the Librarian. It is true that Vassallo's appointment as Librarian, which came into effect on the 1st January 1839, had been made to coincide with the start of the new library arrangements; and it is equally true that Rossignaud had the welfare of the Library really at heart and he gave Vassallo his full support and encouragement especially in the compilation of a Catalogue. But time and again we find Dr. Vassallo, a scholar in his own right, asking the Rector's permission to do certain things of a routine nature that should have required nobody's authority but that of the Librarian on the spot. Such were, for example, authority not to bind Sir J. Hookham Frere's gift of two volumes of his tragedy in one volume, and permission to repair library volumes or to bind works received in loose fascicles.

In book selection the University Council showed a marked bias towards the more advanced type of textbook and for works of a reference nature that were needed for higher studies at the University, and little provision was made for the Lyceum students, for whose needs the University Library was also supposed to cater, or for the public who was allowed access to the University Library. No doubt the University Authorities had valid reasons for trying to stock the Library with modern works of a scholarly nature, for at no time had the specific needs of higher education been met by the Library before. And perhaps the experiment did not last long enough to show whether the requirements of Lyceum students and of the public would have been met by the Library after the more pressing needs of University studies. For even a century ago the practical impossibility of

[41] RUM Arch: *Consiglio Generale* 1840-73 – Minutes of 11th October 1841 and 3rd December 1842.

[42] Malta Government Gazette: Notice dated 30th November 1842 published in the issue of the 30th December 1842.

building and maintaining, without adequate funds, a general library at two different levels so as to meet the needs of the public and of the more serious type of student must have dismayed the most enthusiastic advocate of a Public-University Library.

When the library provisions in the Statute were repealed, the University, apart from a few bequests and odd purchases, remained without a library for more than a century until, in 1947, the nucleus of a research library was started with the help of a grant out of the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund on the recommendation of the Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies. The books that had been transferred to the Government Library in 1839 and those acquired by the University for the Library between 1839 and 1842 were never claimed by, or returned to the University, and many an old treatise that is still required for the study of Maltese Law has had to be re-purchased for the University Library in recent years.

In a special sense, however, the University continued its association with the Government Library and indirectly took part in its primary function of book provision. As a matter of fact, between 1842 and 1947 the needs of University students, professors and professionals continued to be partly met by the acquisition of works recommended for purchase by such members of the University Teaching Staff who were appointed from time to time to sit on the Library Committee.

APPENDIXES

I
RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE UNIVERSITY AND LYCEUM

[*Minute by His Excellency the Governor*]

His Excellency the Governor, having received the orders of Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonial Department to proceed to the revision of the existing Establishments for Public Instruction, on the principles laid down in a Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Enquiry, as far as may be practicable and consistent with a due regard for other demands on the Revenues of the Local Government, is pleased to publish, for general information, the following outline of the re-organization of the University and Lyceum, which will come into operation on the first day of January, 1839.

1. The Council of the University as at present constituted will be abolished.

2. The principal administration of the University and Lyceum will be vested as at present in the Rector.

3. The University will consist of Professors in the four faculties of Philosophy or Arts, Theology, Law and Medicine.

In the faculty of Philosophy or Arts, there will be:

A Professor of Mathematics and Physics;
A Professor of Logic;
A Professor of Political Economy and Statistics;
A Professor of Latin and Italian Literature, Composition, and Elocution.

In the faculty of Theology there will be two Professors.

In the faculty of Law there will be two Professors.

In the faculty of Medicine there will be:

A Professor of Anatomy and Surgery;
A Professor of Medicine;
A Professor of Midwifery;
A Professor of Chemistry;
A Professor of Botany.

In the Lyceum there will be:

A Teacher of Latin;
An Assistant Teacher of Latin;
A Teacher of Italian;
A Teacher of English;
A Teacher of French;
A Teacher of Arabic;
A Teacher of Ancient and Modern Greek;
A Teacher of Arithmetic;
A Teacher of Geometry and Algebra, with Land Surveying;
A Teacher of Navigation;
A Teacher of Writing;
A Teacher of Drawing;
A Teacher of General History and Geography.

4. There will be for each of the four faculties of the University a Special Council, composed of the Rector, the Professors of the Faculty, and two non-professional Members to be chosen by the Governor.

5. There will be a General Council composed of the Rector, and a Committee chosen from the Special Councils, proportionately to their respective members; the Members of which Committee will be chosen by the Governor, or by lot.

6. Previously to the creation of the Special and General Councils, a

fundamental statute, determining the government and management of the University and Lyceum, will be made by the authority of the Governor.

7. Whenever it may be found necessary to alter such statute, the alteration will be made in the following manner: first, if the alteration relate specially to any of the four faculties, it will be made by the Special Council of the Faculty; secondly, if it relate generally to the University or Lyceum, it will be made by the General Council; thirdly, no such alteration will be carried into effect in either case, until it shall have been submitted to the Governor, and approved of by him.

8. On any examination for a degree in any of the four faculties, the non-professional Members of the Special Council for the faculty shall conduct the examination.

9. The Government Library will be deemed the Library of the University, and be placed under the control of the Rector; the public having access to it, and books being allowed to be taken out of it according to the existing rules.

10. The Government Botanical Garden will be placed under the management of the Professor of Botany.

Palace, Valletta, 20th August, 1838.
By Command of His Excellency,

WM. SIM.

Acting Chief Secretary to Govt.

(*Ordinances and other Official Acts*, 1836-41, 1843, p. 111)

II
EXTRACT FROM RECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1839

Università, Valletta
2 Settembre, 1839.

BIBLIOTECA

La Pubblica Biblioteca, che ora sotto la denominazione di *Biblioteca dell'Università* è stata incorporata allo stabilimento, forma pure il soggetto di questo mio rapporto. Dessa dal momento, ch'ebbe luogo la nuova organizzazione degli studi fin'oggi aumentò di 567 (sic) volumi, de'quali 414 appartenevano alla soppressa Libreria dell'Università, 147 per acquisti fatti del 1° Gennaio p.p. fin'oggi, fra i quali si conta l'opera del

Moniteur Francese dall'anno 1789 sino all'anno 1835 – La Storia Naturale, Generale e Particolare di M. Buffon, M. De Lecépède e di M. Cuvier. Parigi 1831-32, voli. 42 con Piance 363 – Cesari, *Vita di Gesù Cristo;* e *Atti degli Apostoli,* Firenze 1832, *voli. 16, in 8vo.*

La Biblioteca deve continuare ancora sotto le antiche leggi circa la circolazione dei libri, essa però in questo momento non offre che un numero di quattordici associati, numero invero assai piccolo, e che il desiderio produce di vederlo aumentato. Rintracciando quindi lo stato attuale di questo dipartimento, e fermandomi io a contemplare i suoi bisogni, uno principalmente mi si presenta, e che concernendo una parte la più essenziale del servizio, io mi sento nel dovere di non trascurare. Questo invero riguarda la formazione di un *Catalogo*, libro di tutta necessità per una pubblica Libreria.

E certamente egli è tempo, che dal pubblico si va anelando la formazione di un Catalogo onde poter essere ognuno informato di tutte le opere, che si contengono nella Biblioteca, del loro merito e dell'uso quindi che di esse si può fare.

Il Catalogo però che tanto si desidera non è invero un indice lavoro, che pel passato sembra già essersi fatto in cinque volumi in fol.; ma all'opposto un repertorio, nella forza della voce greca *Catalogo* la quale significa indice ragionato delle opere, con una esatta notizia del pregio e del merito dell'Autore, delle materie e del metodo onde elleno sono trattate, e della qualità dell'edizione. Un simile lavoro io ho osservato già compilato dall'Abate Strano, Bibliotecario della Libreria Ventimiliana di Catania, opera sin da tempo fa pubblicata, e che si conserva in questa Biblioteca; non è adunque impossibile o malagevole di avere un'altra simile, la quale abbraccia le opere esistenti in questa Biblioteca; anzi il Catalogo, che si accinge di formare l'attuale Bibliotecario non sembra troppo lontano da tale progetto.

Ma io per render più facile l'esecuzione dell'opera, seguendo l'ovvio proverbio, che *facile est inventis addere*, raccomando, che riscontrate sopra il Catalogo della Biblioteca Ventimiliana le opere che in questa vi esistono e descritte esattamente in un repertorio, conforme si trovano già insinuate in quel Catalogo, il di più delle altre, che non confronta col medesimo, sia sopra quel metodo Ventimiliano ricompiuto dal Bibliotecario, seguendo notizie le più accreditate, che relativamente a tale opere si trovano riportate in vari giornali scientifici e letterari.

Egli ancora ove il bisogno occorrerà potrà ricorrere all'assistenza dei Professori, i quali a mio giudizio, ora che la Biblioteca è incorporata all'Università, non saranno per ricusare la loro opera per la formazione di un libro, che certamente manifesterà il pregio di questa Biblioteca,

ignorandosi ora il merito di tante pregievoli opere, le quali giacciono ivi sepolte, e che senza la formazione di un Catalogo nella suddivisata maniera giammai si conoscerà, giacchè non riuscirebbe a manifestarlo neanche una descrizione bibliografica, la quale non potrà riguardare che il solo merito delle edizioni, e non mai quello delle materie; oggetto sul quale sono rivolte le premure del Pubblico, a cui va unito ancora l'interesse degli studenti, i quali senza tal Catalogo non potranno conoscere le opere a loro utili.

Anche gli associati in tal guisa a mio giudizio aumenterebbero. Ignorando il pubblico la serie delle opere che si trovano nella Biblioteca, il loro pregio e le materie sulle quali trattano, egli è impossibile, che individui di questo pubblico possono sentirsi invitati a cercare il comodo dell'associazione; per la diramazione della quale per altro io crederei ancora molto condurre la raccomandazione, che ne vien fatta dal Bibliotecario nel suo rapporto a me diretto, per l'acquisto di giornali letterari e scientifici, che giornalmente si pubblicano negli idiomi italiano, inglese, e francese. E siccome è tempo che si va sentendo il bisogno della formazione dell'anzidetto Catalogo, per cui ci sarà necessario tempo, fatica ed assiduità; siccome anche allo scopo d'intrapprendere tale lavoro il Bibliotecario si trova aver già collazionato un assai estese numero di polizze contenenti ciascuna il nome, e cognome dell'Autore, il titolo dell'opera, il nome del Tipografo, e coll'aggiunta delle osservazioni bibliografiche, il quale lavoro già fatto abbraccia la terza parte dei libri della Biblioteca, è mia opinione, anzi raccomando, che per non lasciare più oltre defraudato il Pubblico nelle sue aspettazioni, e per isperimentare anche il buon successo dell'impresa, cui ci accingiamo, dalle opere già collazionate siano scelte quelle che cadono sotto la lettera *A*, e sopra di essa dato presto principio alla compilazione del Catalogo nella forma sopra descritta;

(R.U.M. Arch. *Letter Book* 1836-9)

III
EXTRACT FROM RECTOR'S REPORT FOR 1839/40

Università Valletta,
13 Ottobre, 1840.

...Omissis...

Dal rapporto fattomi dal Bibliotecario, io rilevo che nel corso dell'ora

passato anno scolastico, varii lavori sono stati fatti dal medesimo, fra i quali un registro, ossia indice generale diviso in tre volumi di tutte le opere esistenti nella medesima coll'indicazione in ordine alfabetico del sesto, del numero dei volumi e dello scaffale ove esse si trovano collocate.

La Biblioteca aumentò dentro quest'anno di ventinove opere, non inclusi i giornali letterarii, il dizionario tecnologico, e l'opera classica di Rossini sulla pittura, cui trovasi associata. Riguarda la piùparte delle opere acquistate i rami della Giurisprudenza e della Medicina.

Gli associati intanto van sempre riducendosi ad un numero assai limitato, per ovviare al quale inconveniente, crede il Bibliotecario opportuno accrescere l'indice di circolazione di libri attualmente non descritti nello stesso.

...omissis...

(R.U.M. Arch. *Letter Book* 1839-42)

IV
RECTOR'S OUTLINE OF LIBRARY POLICY

[*Extract from Minutes of 12th April 1839*]

...La pubblica Libreria colla nuova organizzazione divenuta Biblioteca dell' Università forma ancora uno di quegli oggetti circa il quale dobbiamo occuparci. Dessa abbenchè si trova fornita di molte belle, eleganti e classiche opere, specialmente nelle scienze ecclesiastiche, nelle arti e nel Disegno, deficiente però si trova di una buona collezione di varie opere moderne in tutti quasi i rami scientifici e letterari. Un'opera assai commendevole ed importante si è ultimamente aquistata, quest'è il *Monitore Francese*, la cui importanza nel vasto campo dello studio sulla Storia dei nostri tempi, nessun v'ha chi ignori. Contiene quest'opera novanta nove volumi in foglio, ed arriva fino all'anno 1835 dal 1789 ed ha costato £84 sterline.

Il libro che sulla tavola innanzi a noi si trova aperto è appunto quello di cui parla lo Statuto all'Art. 89; in esso si trovano notate alcune opere, delle quali potrebbe farsi l'acquisto. Sarei però di avviso di procedere molto cauti sul proposito di tali acquisti, e di usare ogni possibile nostra attenzione nel procurare l'acquisto di quelle tali opere, che per la loro importanza, si resero già nominalmente celebri, e che d'altronde utili riescono agli amatori delle lettere, delle arti e delle scienze. Sopra tutto

poi io opino, che i primi acquisti debbano essere fatti di opere concernanti la letteratura italiana ed inglese, ora specialmente che di tali rami la nuova organizzazione ci offre due scuole. I libri inglesi sono assai cari, quindi è verosimile che non tutti i giovani possano fare di essi l'aquisto; è giusto adunque che un comodo lor si prepara onde progredire in sì importanti studi.....

(R.U.M. Arch. *Consiglio Generale* 1838-40)

V
BOOKS APPROVED FOR PURCHASE 1839-41

[*Minutes of 19th April 1839*]

.....Fu indi sottoposto al Consiglio il registro dei libri proposti per farsene acquisto, giusto l'Articolo 89 dello Statuto Fondamentale, ed il medesimo ha fatto la seguente scelta di libri:

Mahon: *Medicina Legale;* Pothier: *De regulis juris*, e le altre opere in latino o in italiano riguardanti i diversi trattati, come la Compra e Vendita, le ultime volontà, ecc.; De Lolme: *On the Constitution of England: The Philosophy on the Evidence,* by Daniel Mckinnon; Lemmi: *Introduzione alla Storia del Diritto;* Andres, Giovanni: *Dell'origine, progresso e stato attuale di ogni letteratura;* Carmignani: *Istituzioni Criminali,* Edizione novissima.....

[*Minutes of 22nd April 1839*]

.....Seduto il Consiglio, si continuò l'esame del registro dei libri proposti per farsene acquisto, e se ne fece la scelta seguente: *Dizionario di Medicina e di Chirurgia pratiche in francese,* Voli. 15; Frank: *Polizia Medica;* Bercastell: *Storia del Cristianesimo,* 36 vols.; *Twelve lectures on the Connexion between Science and Revealed Religion* delivered at Rome by Nicholas Wiseman D.D. 2 vols.; *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind,* by the late Thomas Brown M.D. Professor of moral philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, 1 vol.; Poisson's *Mechanics;* Lacroix's *Differential & Integral Calculus*; Biot's *Elements of Physics;* Johnson's *Dictionary;* Blair's *Lectures.*

Tali opere si devono acquistare progressivamente e in proporzione ai fondi, incominciando da quelle appartenenti alle Matematiche.

[*Minutes of 1st July 1839*]

Finalmente fu sottoposto al Consiglio Generale il registro di libri pro-

posti per farsene acquisto, e si è fatta la scelta seguente: Tutte le opere dell'Abate Antonio Cesari; Carswell's *Pathological Anatomy*, with Plates».

[*Minutes of 3rd January 1840*]

...Finalmente è stato sottoposto al Consiglio il registro dei libri proposti per aquistarsi, a tenor dell'Arto. 89 dello statuto fondamentale, e se n'è fatta la seguente scelta: *Storia della Pittura Italiana esposta coi monumenti da* Giovanni Rosini – in associazione; Savignez: *Trattato del Diritto del Possesso.*

[*Minutes of 31st March 1840*]

...Finalmente è stato sottomesso al Consiglio il libro delle opere proposte per farsene acquisto, e se n'è fatta la scelta seguente: Averani: *Interpretationes Juris*, libr. 5 in 4; Dall'Olio: *Elementi di leggi civili romane*; Reinazzi: *Elementa Juris Criminalis*; Matthei: *De Criminibus*, colle note del G. C. Nani; Carmignani: *Teoria delle leggi della sicurezza sociale;* Carmignani: *Elementa juris Criminalis*; *Causa per pretesa complicità di peculato; Lezione accademica sulla pena di morte;* Leoni: *Lettere intorno alla pena di morte; Pratica Criminale secondo il Codice d'Istruzione;* Quartieri: *Ermeneutica legale:* Pardesseus: *Corso di diritto Commerciale; Delle lettere di cambio;* Azuni: *Dizionario universale della Giurispr. Comme.*, colle note del Dr. Ricci; Lampredi: *Diritto di Natura e delle genti;* Manè: *Corso di diritto commerciale.*

(R.U.M. Arch. *Consiglio Generale* 1838-40)

[*Minutes of 27th November 1840*]

...Indi è stato sottomesso al Consiglio il libro delle opere proposte per essere aquistate per la Biblioteca, ed il Rettore ha osservato che in oggi si vanno pubblicando varii giornali scientifici, i quali contenendo tutte le scoperte e tutti i lumi che si vanno di continuo facendo, sarebbero di grande utilità pel nostro paese. Quindi egli propone che se ne facesse associare la Biblioteca.

Al che il Consiglio ha unanimamente aderito, ed ha inoltre scelto le opere seguenti: Solly: *On the nervous system.* 1 vol.; Gorini: *Geometria Elementare*; Brunacci: *Elementi di Algebra e Geometria*; Bordoni: *Geodesia e Lezioni di Calcolo Sublime.*

[*Minutes of 11th January 1841*]

...Indi è stato sottomesso al Consiglio il registro delle opere proposte per farsene acquisto per la Biblioteca, e sono state scelte le seguenti:

Lotteri: *Introduzione al Calcolo sublime.* Tom 2, Pavia, 1821-22; *Etudes sur les Constitutions des Peuples libres,* Bruxelles, 1839, in 8vo. 1 vol; *Trattato delle procedure civili nel foro di Malta,* dell'Avvocato Micallef. Malta, 1839, 8vo: 1vol.

[*Minutes of 3rd April 1841*]

... Si è sottomesso in ultimo al Consiglio il libro delle opere proposte per farsene acquisto alla Biblioteca, ed il Consiglio fa la seguente scelta: Tommaseo: *Studi Filosofici;* Id. *Dizionario dei Sinonimi;* Dalloz: *Giurisprudenza dei fallimenti;* Gunier: *Trattato delle Ipoteche;* Pozzi: *Lezioni di Filosofia;* Romagnosi: *Trattato delle acque;* Id. *Introduzione allo studio del diritto pubblico universale;* Id. *Ricerche della validità dei giudizi;* Id. *Statistica Civile;* Id. *Della ragion civile delle acque,* Id. *Assunto primo della scienze del diritto naturale;* Laromiguiere: *Lezioni di filosofia;* Gioja: *Dell'ingiuria, dei danni: ecc.;* Perticari: *Opere,* in 2 volume; *Viaggio di Anacarsi il giovine,* con atlante; *Histoire de Malte,* par Mr. Miege; Salfi, *Ristretto della storia della letteratura italiana.*

[*Minutes of 9th July 1841*]

... Indi è stato al Consiglio sottomesso il libro delle opere proposte per essere acquistate per la Biblioteca, e se n'è fatta la scelta delle seguenti opere: Carmignani: *Lezione accademica sulla pena di morte;* Pardesseus: *Corso di diritto Commerciale; Delle lettere di cambio;* Chelius: *Chirurgia,* traduzione dal francese; Milizia: *Principii di Architettura Civile;* Collini: *Orazioni Civili e Criminali;* Tommaso Grossi: *Opere Letterarie;* Fornacciari: *Esempi di bello scrivere;* Campana: *Farmacopea,* Chevallier: *Trattato elementare di Farmacia;* Paoli: *Elementi di Algebra;* Muller: *Storia universale,* traduzione di Barbieri; *British Essayists* – 30 vol. in 12; *Memoires de l'Academie de France e Memorie della Società Italiana;* (incominciando dal Vol., dell'anno corrente); *Memorie ed Atti dell'I.R. Istituto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti di Milano,* dall'incominciamento della loro publicazione; Burdack: *Physiologie;* Sprengel: *Storia della Medicina;* Scarpa: *Opere Chirurgiche; Compte Rendu de l'Institut.*

[*Minutes of 30th September 1841*]

Si è indi sottomesso al Consiglio il libro delle opere proposte per la Biblioteca, e non se n'è fatta alcuna scelta;

(R.U.M. Arch. *Consiglio Generale* 1840-73)

VI
RESIGNATION OF CANON E. ROSSIGNAUD, RECTOR

Chief Secretary's office,
Valletta.
5th October, 1841.

Sir,

In reference to the sanction given to the offer of the General Council of the University to prepare a new plan of the Studies of the different classes, I have the honour to acquaint you that the Statute, etc. are at present under revision in London, and, moreover, as the new Rector will arrive here in the course of four or five weeks, it seems fitting to the Officer Administering the Government to relieve the Council from the further prosecution of the new plan so as to save them unnecessary trouble until the arrival of His Excellency the Governor, who will give the necessary instructions on the subject.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient humble servant,

(Sd) H. GREIG

Chief Secretary to Government

(R.U.M. Arch. *Government Letters* 1839-41)

[*Minutes of Meeting due to be held on 11th October 1841*]

L'adunanza del Consiglio Generale non si è oggi tenuta, attese le disposizioni date dal Governo sul proposito dello schema degli studi, e contenuto nella lettera dal Principale Segretario di Governo diretta al Rettore il 5 del corrente.

(R.U.M. Arch. *Consiglio Generale* 1840-73)

Chief Secretary's office,
Valletta.
30th October, 1841.

Sir,

I am directed by the Officer Administering the Government to request that, in consequence of the pending arrangements respecting the situation of the Rector of the University, you will not draw the salary of that

situation for the month of October, now ending, nor until you receive further orders on the subject.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient humble servant,

(Sd) H. GREIG

Chief Secretary to Government

To the Reverend
Dr. Don E. Rossignaud,
Rector of the University.

(R.U.M. Arch. *Government Letters* 1839-41)

NOTICE

The Reverend Canon Dr Emanuele Rossignaud having requested to be relieved from his duties as Rector of the University, the Government has been pleased to comply with his wishes, and His Excellency is happy to take this opportunity to express the high opinion he entertains of the zealous and unwearied efforts of Canon Rossignaud to promote the good of the University.

In consequence of the above resignation the Governor has been pleased to appoint the Rev. Thaddeus O'Malley to be Rector of the University.

Palace, 19th November, 1841.

By Command of His Excellency

(Sd) H. GREIG

Chief Secretary to Government

A true Copy
H. GREIG
Chief Secretary

(R.U.M. Arch. *Government Letters* 1839-41)

Chief Secretary's Office,
Valletta, 27th Nov. 1841.

Sir,

I am directed by His Excellency the Governor to acquaint you that he has deemed it expedient to suspend until further orders the operation of Articles 22, 23, 26 and 29 of the Fundamental Statute of the University

relating to the assembling of the General and Special Councils, except in the case contemplated in §3d of the said Articles 22 and 26 respectively.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient humble servant,

(Sd) H. GREIG

Chief Secretary to Government

To The Rev. T. O'Malley,
Rector of the University.

(R.U.M. Arch. *Government Letters* 1839-41)

VII
LIBRARY PROVISIONS IN STATUTE RESCINDED

[*Minute by His Excellency the Governor*]

His Excellency the Governor is pleased to rescind so much of the Fundamental Statute of the University as regards the administration, management and control of the Public Library, now attached to the University, and to declare that all the powers in regard to the administration, management and control of the said Library, which by the said Statute are now vested in the Rector of the University, shall, from this day, be entrusted to a Committee to be appointed by the Governor, of which Committee the Rector of the University for the time being and the Librarian of the said Library for the time being, shall be Members.

Palace, Valletta, 30th Nov., 1842.
By Command of His Excellency

(Sd) H. GREIG

Chief Secretary to Government

(*The Malta Government Gazette* – Issue of 30th December 1842)

PUBLICATION OF THE ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

THE STRUCTURE OF MALTESE

A Study in Mixed Grammar and Vocabulary

by

Professor J. AQUILINA, B.A., LL.D., Ph.D.(Lond.)

PROFESSOR AQUILINA examines here the structure of the Maltese Language, the interaction of the Semitic and Romance elements which build it up into a separate language spoken by the Maltese nation. The subject-matter deals with phonology, morphology and syntax of Semitic and Romance Maltese, with a considerable number of examples illustrating the rules established in the course of this work, including also a considerable amount of comparative linguistic material. For this reason, this book should engage the attention not only of comparative Semitists, especially scholars of the Arabic language and dialectology, but also of Romance linguists. To enable linguists unacquainted with Maltese to peruse the contents of this book, the author has used the symbols of the International Phonetic Association with some minor departures to suit the nature of the Maltese Language.

The author holds the Chair of Maltese in the Royal University of Malta and has contributed articles of linguistic interest to learned reviews in the United Kingdom, Belgium and Holland.

9 x 6 inches, x + 358 pp., *about* £2. 2*s*.