

## 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.<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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*.<sup>3</sup> 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 Library.<sup>4</sup> 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*,<sup>5</sup> while on the 15th January 1836 the Rector was authorised to purchase up to £2 worth of law books.<sup>6</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> *Copies or Extracts of Reports of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Affairs of Malta*, Part II, 1838, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* – Minutes of meeting held on 11th March, 1835.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* – Minutes of meeting held on 10th September, 1835.

<sup>6</sup> *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.<sup>7</sup>

### *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*,

<sup>7</sup> *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.'<sup>8</sup>

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,<sup>9</sup> 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

<sup>8</sup> *Ordinances and other Official Acts...* 1836-1841. Malta, 1843, p. 111

<sup>9</sup> 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 vigilant 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.<sup>10</sup> This phase in the history

<sup>10</sup> 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<sup>11</sup> 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.	0s.	0d.
Paolo Falzon	Deliverer of books	£ 40.	0s.	0d.
Giuseppe Ellul	Porter	£ 20.	0s.	0d.

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.<sup>12</sup>

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. 18s. 6d. was spent on books. At the same time, the following funds were available for the new University Library<sup>13</sup> 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 Revm. 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).

<sup>11</sup> Caruana, A.A., *The Royal Public Library of Malta*, Malta, 1898; Leopardi, E.R., *Il-Biblijoteka 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.'

<sup>12</sup> 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*.

<sup>13</sup> 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.	0s.	0d.
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 <i>Massa Frumentaria</i> <sup>14</sup>	43	6	8
Sale of superfluous books belonging to the Library	43	2	¼
Subscriptions for the circulation of books from the Library <sup>15</sup>	5	15	0
Total	£309.	8	11

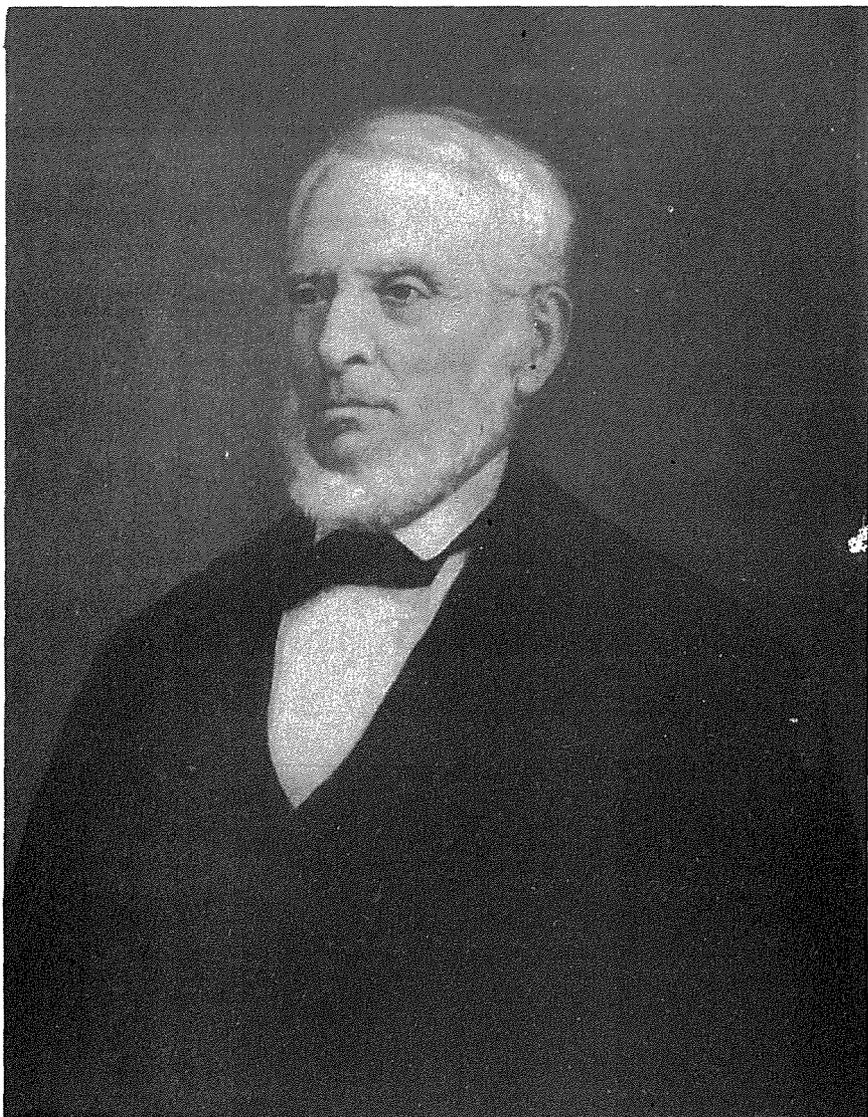
Summarizing the above, Personal Emoluments amounted to £185; Other Charges to £309. 8s. 11d. The Expenses in respect of book purchases totalled £133. 18s. 6d. The Commissioners' recommendation to apply one-third of University fees to book purchases, etc. was not acted upon. This would have amounted to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

<sup>14</sup> 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).

<sup>15</sup> A charge of 8s. 4d. 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.<sup>16</sup> 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'.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup>

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

<sup>16</sup> RUM Arch: *Letter Book* 1836-9.

<sup>17</sup> RUM Arch: *Government Letters* 1839-41.

<sup>18</sup> RUM Arch: *Letter Book* 1836-9 - letter dated 6th April 1839.

<sup>19</sup> RUM Arch: *Consiglio Generale* 1838-40 - Minutes of Meeting held on 12th April 1839.

Council between 1839 and 1841<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup> 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*"<sup>22</sup>.

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.<sup>23</sup>

### *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.<sup>24</sup> On the 27th November 1840 the

<sup>20</sup> Vide list of books appended to this article (p. 80 sqq).

<sup>21</sup> RUM Arch: *Government Letters* 1839-41 – letter dated 12th January 1839.

<sup>22</sup> RUM Arch: *Consiglio Generale* 1838-40 – Minutes of meeting held on 12th April 1839.

<sup>23</sup> Schembri, A., *Selva di autori e traduttori maltesi...*, Malta, 1855, p. 24.

<sup>24</sup> 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<sup>25</sup>.

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.<sup>26</sup> 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<sup>27</sup>. 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*.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> RUM Arch: *Consiglio Generale* 1840-73 – Minutes of meeting held on 27th November 1840.

<sup>26</sup> Vide Rector's Report for 1839, already quoted in 10.

<sup>27</sup> RUM Arch: *Letter Book* 1839-41.

<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup>

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

<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup>

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.<sup>31</sup>

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

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup>

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'.<sup>33</sup>

### *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.<sup>34</sup>

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

<sup>32</sup> 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.

<sup>33</sup> RUM Arch: *Government Letters* 1839-41.

<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup>

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.<sup>36</sup>

*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

<sup>35</sup> RUM Arch: *Government Letters* 1839-41.

<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup> 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 £ 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<sup>38</sup> and on the 17th November

<sup>37</sup> Laferla, A.V., *British Malta* Vol. I, 1938, p. 170.

<sup>38</sup> 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, judging 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 decidedly 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.<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup> Upon this, the Council meeting due to be held on

<sup>39</sup> *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).

<sup>40</sup> 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.<sup>41</sup>

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.<sup>42</sup>

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

<sup>41</sup> RUM Arch: *Consiglio Generale* 1840-73 — Minutes of 11th October 1841 and 3rd December 1842.

<sup>42</sup> 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'operadel

*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, vol. 42 con Piane 363 - Cesari, *Vita di Gesù Cristo; e Atti degli Apostoli*, Firenze 1832, vol. 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'intraprendere 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 aspettative, 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, vari 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 più parte 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 acquistata, 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'acquisto; 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 acquistarsi, 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; Savigneux: *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. Comm.*, 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 acquistate 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 Micalfef. Malta, 1839, 8vo: 1vol.

[Minutes of 3rd<sup>a</sup> 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.*; Peticari: *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*; Pardes-  
seus: *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*, Chevalier: *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 pubblicazione; 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.I.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)