

13/10/2017

Visita delegazione  
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

La biblioteca dell'ARS.  
Storia dei Parlamenti di Sicilia

# Armigers' Room

The reading room of the ARS library.



This is the consultation room of the library of the Sicilian Regional Assembly. It is called *The Armigers' Room* because it was used as storeroom for troops in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This was one of the several uses that were made of the palace.

The rooms of the library are mostly adjacent spaces, together with the rooms of the so called *Zecca* (the mint). In there we keep the treasures of the library and the majority of the monographs we have. The mint passageway dates back to centuries ago.



## The Hallway of the Mint

# The mint room



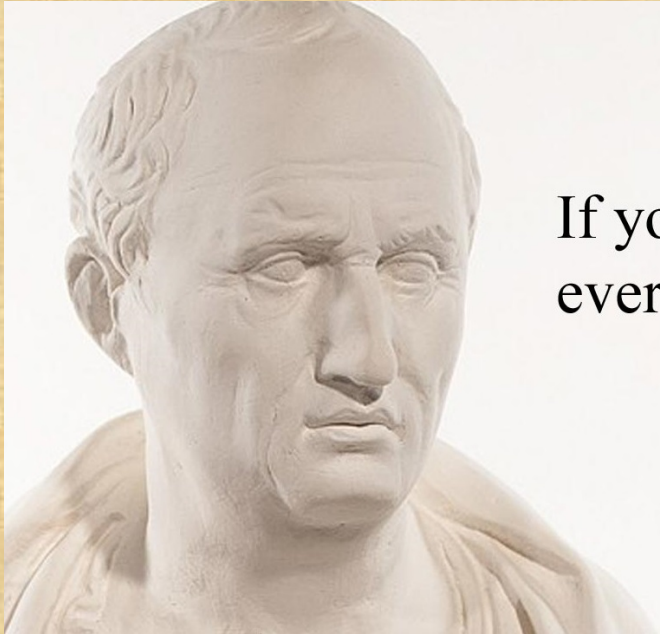
The library is currently undergoing some changes. Many monographs, the collections of newspapers, and most of the magazines were stored in a big room in the bottom part of the palace that overlooks Piazza del Parlamento. This big storage room is called *rimessone*. This room was emptied in 2012 and the books were moved to another storage room that we rented.

In the following days, after getting the authorizations we need and fixing the rooms, the books will be taken back to the palace. They will be placed in a mobile raking system. This way we can save a lot of space since the material will be stored according to the size and not following the usual rules of classification in open shelving.

# The History of the Library

The library was created with the parliamentary institution and we found traces of it in the first internal regulations of the ARS. The regulations, approved in 1949, define that the library has to be directed by a supervisory committee of three members of the parliament. The special regulations of the library specify its field of action and define it as a general library. Despite that, many texts are about the history of Sicily or constitutional, administrative and regional law.

This is added to the role of support that the library plays for the staff and the members of the parliament for the good success of their work.



If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need.

*Marcus Tullius Cicero*

In the regulations of the assembly of 1949, a specific title is devoted to the library (title V, articles from 161 to 165). In these sections the role of the supervisory committee is specified. The committee is composed of 3 members. The current president is Marika Cirone Di Marco from Partito Democratico.

The library has its own set of rules; this is a sign of autonomy and peculiarity.

This is article n.1 of the current set of rules (it is kept in the location of the regional assembly together with the regulations of the whole institution).

## Chart of the ARS Library

### ART. 1

- The library, created with the first regulations of the assembly approved on March 17 and June 22, 1949, is at the service of the assembly and its members. It provides them with the cultural instruments useful to the fulfillment of their institutional activity.
- It has a general nature, with many works related to history or law, but also social sciences, politics, economics and applied sciences.
- The library also buys from antique shops, in order to create a bibliography on the main themes of the history of Sicily.
- The library supports the institution of a newspaper library to make easy the consultation of the national periodical press.



Ceiling of the Mint Room



Marguerite Yourcenar's words fit perfectly the general nature of the library.  
She wrote :

*“The founding of libraries was like constructing more public granaries, amassing reserves against a spiritual winter which by certain signs, in spite of myself, I see ahead...”*

— Marguerite Yourcenar, Memoirs of Hadrian

To fight against the spiritual winter more cultural instruments are necessary: history, law, and literature should go together with technical knowledge.

The library is considered a parliamentary library.

It contains many traces of the parliamentary history of Sicily.

The parliament was very different in the past. It was an itinerant parliament that would move with the king. This concept is far from the modern idea of parliament as an organ of representative democracy. Its axis, visually but also geographically, was moving with the king not with the assembly or the deputation.

## The Heritage

The library has today more than 170.000 texts. Among them 60.000 monographs, 1350 magazines, 141 newspapers.

- In this location there are about 35.000 texts that we keep on inventorying and measuring to be aware of our heritage.
- The classification method is the DEWEY. It was used to place all the books in the mint room.
- After a reduction in the workforce, the library is missing librarians or helpers, for which we are waiting for the competition announcements.
- The library also contains:
  - about 2500 ancient editions
  - the collection *Villasevaglios* on the history of Sicily and the local institutions with its 900 precious volumes
  - the archive collection *Arezzo di Trifiletti* about the parliamentary history of Sicily and the revolution of 1848. This collection contains a number of volumes of great historical interest, about the parliaments of 1848-49, with articles, press releases, letters and military reports, decrees, memoranda and other precious relics.

## The catalogue

- The catalogue of the library is currently available on the website of the Sicilian Regional Assembly. Only the staff or the parliament members can borrow the texts for a maximum of one month. Rare or precious editions can't be borrowed.
- Students with their professors and scholars can enter the library if they need to consult the volumes for research projects, study or publications. The library will receive two copies of the produced work, if published.
- We are considering the possibility for the library to be part of the Polo SBN. Its library of reference is the Central Library in Corso Vittorio Emanuele. The project is now in standby because of the current renovation.

# The historical archive

- The library was an important part of the administrative department in the past. Today, after the spending review policy of the past few years, it became a mere office. This is, however, only a nominal change, since there were no modifications in the tasks and functions of the structure.
- Inside the office, part of the institutional area managed by M. Di Piazza, there is also the historical archive. It was created in 2007 for the visit of the Head of the State of that time, Giorgio Napolitano.
- The archive, in S. Elena and Costantino church, contains all the documents related to the Sicilian Regional Assembly and its activity up to 40 years ago. The term *historical* implies in fact that the documents should have been kept there for at least 40 years.
- Three cataloguers, thanks to an agreement with the Archives authority in Sicily, are still listing and organizing the documents of the historical archive of ARS.





## The Parliamentary History of Sicily

The origin of the Sicilian parliament dates back to the beginning of the Norman period. The Normans introduced the parliamentary institution in Sicily, not with the modern idea but as an assembly with the most important personalities of the feudal system.

After the creation of the Kingdom of Sicily, a basic idea of parliament was created in Palermo in 1130. In the same year, in fact, all the Norman princes were called for the coronation of Roger II, king of Sicily.

The number 1130 is now carved in the wood of the Hercules Room, together with 1947, the year of the institution of the first Sicilian Regional Assembly.

Not long time before, in England, William the Conqueror gathered the first assembly during his claim to the throne.



On the ceiling of the yellow room, on the first floor of the palace, you can see paintings portraying Roger II entering the city of Palermo after chasing the Moors.



*This is a part of the mosaic representing Roger II receiving the crown from Jesus Christ. This mosaic is in Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio church, called "la Martorana".*

The historian Vincenzo Auria, born in the 17th century, wrote *“Discorso dell’origine de’Parlamenti e loro donativi nel Regno di Sicilia con diversi Parlamenti antichi dell’anno 1285 e seguenti”*, it is a manuscript version and is kept in the City Library of Palermo.

In this text he describes, using important historical sources, the origins of the Parliament:

*“when the Romans started their domination in Sicily, four cities (Syracuse, Palermo, Lilibeo and Messina) were supposed to be the praetors’ residence where they would organize the meetings... after many centuries these habits came back to Sicily with Roger II. After chasing the Moors, he gave the Sicilian churches part of the wealth, the other part was given to noblemen and captains and he kept the rest for himself. He did this in the public parliament, that he divided into three branches: ecclesiastic, military and state owned”*.

However, more recent historiography considers the parliament organized by Martino I in Syracuse in 1398 to be the first parliament, since in there a more aware legislative action was made.



The activity of the parliament was performed through the proposition and approval of the *donativa*, that are the taxes that the parliament would give the king for the public interest. No tax could be imposed without the approval.

The parliament was exercising its legislative function by determining draft laws.

If they were approved by the king, they were called *capitula* (meaning *created by chiefs*) and became laws.

The approval of the *capitula* was the final act of a complex process that started with the Parliament asking the king for taxes.

Once receiving the approval, they were organized in *capitula* from a parliamentary commission.

The act containing the *capitula* was then given to the king as a petition. The king could also reject the norms.

The approved *capitula* entered into force after the *exequatur*, that is the order of execution from the viceroy and the publication in front of the Holy Royal Council.

In other words, if originally the legislative power was only managed by the king, later in 1296, Frederic II, king of Sicily, ordered to gather the parliament every year at All-Saints day. In this meeting they could decide the different *donativa* and communicate to the king the needs of the island.

This event contributed to the establishment of the parliamentary institution. In 1398, for the first time, the assembly presented the *capitula* and the petitions to the king asking for the approval.

That parliament also decided the division into three branches: ecclesiastic, military and state owned. This division would persist until 1812.

During the late Aragonese period (1446~1457), the approval of the *capitula* became the fruit of a delicate equilibrium, at first inside the parliament itself, later between the parliament and the king. In other words, the approval of the *capitula* was for the king a compensation for the *donativa* received.

VTRIVSQVE SICILIAE  
**CONSTITVTIONES,**  
CAPITVLA, RITVS,  
ET PRAGMATICAE.

Doctissimis Andraë de Isernia, Bartholomæi de Capua, & aliorum Illustrum  
Iurisconsultorum, quorum nomina sequens pagina indicabit,  
Commentarijs illustrata.

*ET NOVISSIME SVMMA CVRA, ET  
diligentia aucta, recognita, & repurgata.*

Accesserunt Additiones nunquam antè hac impressæ, Clariss. Iureconsultorum  
Iac. Anelli de Bottis Regij Confiliarij, Io. Angeli Pisanelli, Fabij Iordani,  
Bartholomæi Martialis, ac Marci Antonij Puluerini:

CONGESTAE, ET SVIS LOCIS DISPOSITAE  
per Ioan. Baptistam Muzillum, Iurisconsultum Neapolitanum.

CVM PRIVILEGIIS.



VENETIIS, M D LXXX.

Cura & impensâ Nicolai de Bottis Neap. & Sociorum.

Published in  
Venice, in 1590.

Vtriusque Siciliae  
constitutiones, capitula,  
ritus, et pragmaticae,  
doctissimis Andraeae de  
Isernia, Bartholomaei de  
Capua, & aliorum  
illustrum  
iurisconsultorum, [...]   
commentarijs

ARS Library

In the time between the sessions, the parliament was represented by the deputation of the kingdom of Sicily.

There were the chiefs of the three branches:

- military (barons owning inhabited feuds)
- ecclesiastic (prelates with benefits from royal patronage)
- state owned (with representatives from the 42 cities, among them Palermo, Catania, Messina, Milazzo, Nicosia and Cefalù, that were locations of Parliament during the Aragonese and Swabian reigns)

9 more deputies (3 per branch) were in charge until the convocation of the new parliament

The original task of the deputies was to divide the *donativa*. After a reformation that created a unique deputation for the whole kingdom, they were in charge of the management and coordination of all the *donativa*, and they also had to check the fiscal capacity of the subjects. The deputation started then to have a political role, checking the respect of the king's norms.

ORDINAZIONI E REGOLAMENTI  
DELLA  
**DEPUTAZIONE**  
DEL REGNO DI SICILIA  
RACCOLTI, E PUBBLICATI PER ORDINE  
DELLA SACRA REAL MAESTA'  
D I  
**FERDINANDO III.**  
RE DELLE DUE SICILIE, GERUSALEMME ETC.



IN PALERMO MDCCLXXXII. NELLA REALE STAMPERIA.

CON APPROVAZIONE.

The origin of the term “deputato” (deputy).

It's the past participle of the Latin verb “deputare”, (*put someone in charge of a task*). The term was used since 1848 to define the members of the chamber of deputies in the kingdom of Sardinia, from 1861 to 1939 those in the kingdom of Italy, from 1939 to 1943 those of the Chamber of Fasci and Corporations and from 1946 to 1948 those of the Constituent assembly of the Republic of Italy.

Since 1948, we call deputies the members of the Chamber of Deputies and the members of the Sicilian Regional Assembly (so defined in the special status of the region that is a constitutional law).

To perform its task, the deputation of the reign used the so called *reveals of souls and goods*, an old version of the current income tax declaration.

The main sources of the parliamentary history are:

- ~the general parliaments that have the reports of the parliamentary sessions
- ~the *capitula* collected and published since 1497
- ~the protocols with convocation letters for the opening of the parliamentary session, notes of communication among the branches, the elections, the petitions...

The ARS library contains examples of these sources.

  
**PARLAMENTI  
GENERALI  
ORDINARI, E STRAORDINARI.**

Celebrati nel Regno di Sicilia dal 1494. fino al 1658.

RACCOLTI DA DON ANDREA MARCHESE,

Con l'Aggiunta in questa nuova impressione di quelli del 1661. fino al 1714.  
DEL DOTTOR DON PIETRO BATTAGLIA,

Col Compendio di essi Parlamenti, e tre Tavole. La Prima, de' Parlamenti,  
e de' Rè, Vicerè, Anno, e Luogo, ove si celebrorno. La Seconda?  
de' Deputati del Regno. La Terza, delle Cose notabili.

E con le Memorie Istoriche dell'antico, e moderno uso del Parlamento appresso  
varie Nazioni, ed in particolare della sua origine in Sicilia. Notizia  
di varj Parlamenti di esso Regno prima del 1494.  
e del modo di celebrarli,

DI D. ANTONINO MONGITORE SACERDOTE PALERMITANO.

RISTAMPATI

NEL GOVERNO DELL'ECCELLENTISSIMO SIGNORE

**D. ANNIBALE CONTE MAFFEI**

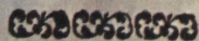
CAVALIERE DELLA SACRA RELIGIONE DE' SANTI MAURIZIO, E LAZARO,  
Gentiluomo della Camera di S.M., Tenente Marescialle nelle sue Armate, Generale  
Gran Maestro dell' Artiglieria in tutti i suoi Stati, Vicerè, Luogotenente,  
e Capitan Generale in questo Regno di Sicilia.

D' O R D I N E

**DELL' ILL. DEPUTAZIONE DEL REGNO**

ESSENDO DEPUTATI

D. Nicolò Placido Branciforti Principe di Butera.	Fra D. Giuseppe Gasch Arcive- scovo di Palermo.	Il Pretore di Palermo il Duca Luigi Gaetani.
D. Giuseppe Branciforti Principe di Scordia.	D. Girolamo Gioeni Duca d'Angiò.	D. Ferdinando Francesco Gravi- na Principe di Palagonia.
D. Ottavio Montaperto Principe di Raffadale.	D. Federico Napoli, e Barresi, Principe di Resuttano.	D. Giuseppe Valguarnera Prin- cipe di Niscemi, M.R. del R.P.
D. Giuseppe Gravina Principe di Montevago.	D. Raffaele Bellacera Marchese Duca di Ragalmici.	di Cappa, e Spada, con voto decis. nelle Cause di giustizia.



IN PALERMO, Nella Stamperia di Gio: Battista Aiccardo, MDCCXVII.

Impr. Sidoti V. G.



Impr. Fernandez P.

ASSEMBLEA REGIONALE SICILIANA



*Part of a painting in the room Duke of Montalto, representing a parliamentary meeting in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.*

The main change in the configuration of the parliamentary institution happened in 1812. In that year, the historical context and the relationships with England made the parliament approve a real constitution. The three branches gathered in a plenary meeting, at first at the archiepiscopal seminary of Palermo, then at the college of Jesuits (now Central Library of the region) and they wrote the new constitution. Promoters of the new constitution were Carlo Cottone, prince of Castelnuovo, whose effigy is still in the statue of the homonym square, and Giuseppe Emanuele Ventimiglia, prince of Belmonte. The redaction was made by the abbot Paolo Balsamo. The new parliament was composed of two chambers: the Chamber of Peers with members from the nobility and the clergy, and the House of Commons, with the representatives elected by the electors.

The constitution of 1812, now in the State Archive of Palermo, introduced important changes.

It abolished feudal privileges, and declared all the citizen equals in front of the law and the magistrates. Everyone should pay taxes according to his wealth.


The ARS library has the reports of the 54 parliamentary sessions happened between July 20 and November 6, 1812. These reports are part of the *Arezzo Trifiletti collection*, bought a couple years ago. It contains many documents from the Renaissance period.

The constitution was approved on November 7, 1812. It eventually ended up in nothing since Ferdinand of Bourbon abolished the parliamentary institution in 1815.

Some years later, there was the revolution of 1848 and a temporary government was created, under Roger VII.

The ARS library has some documents of that time, among them the paper that declared the person of Roger VII sacred.

The parliament, back after the interruption of 1812, was then gathered (Pasquale Calvi, Emerico Amari and Francesco Ferrara attended the meeting) in San Domenico church first and then in San Francesco church. The two chambers -elected in 1812- approved a new charter in July 1848 in which both chambers were elective. But only literate people, important landlords and other small categories could vote.



## PARLAMENTO GENERALE DI SICILIA

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Il Parlamento decreta quanto segue:

Articolo unico: — La persona di *Ruggiero Settimo* è dichiarata inviolabile.

Fatto e deliberato in Palermo li 10 maggio 1848.

*Il Presidente della Camera dei Pari*

Firmato — **DUCA DI SERRADIFALCO**

*Il Presidente della Camera dei Comuni*

Firmato — **MARCHESE DI TORRE ARSA**

Per copia conforme

*Il Presidente della Camera dei Pari*

Firmato — **DUCA DI SERRADIFALCO**

Per copia conforme

*Il Presidente del Governo del Regno di Sicilia*

Firmato — **RUGGIERO SETTIMO**

The failure of the revolution of 1848 will lead, after a series of events, to the Expedition of the Thousand, to the plebiscite and to the decision to join the kingdom of Italy in 1860.

After a series of events where Sicily was the protagonist of its own history, the region was created and its special status approved before the entry into force of the republican constitution on May 15, 1946.





# Biblioteca ARS

## Palermo 13/10/17

Testi a cura di

Laura Salamone

Traduzione a cura di

Erika Scopelliti

Segretario Generale

Fabrizio Scimè

Vicesegretario Generale Area Istituzionale

Mario Di Piazza

Ufficio delle raccolte bibliografiche, degli atti ufficiali e della  
documentazione dell'Archivio storico.

Capo ufficio

Laura Salamone

Dipendenti assegnati alla biblioteca: Cinzia Consoli, Giuseppe De  
Michele, Francesca Grillo, Sara Rabito, Monica Virga.