

Incunabula of the State Library

The State Library of the Republic of San Marino was founded in 1839 following the purchase by the Council of the collection of books belonging to the heirs of Antonio Onofri. At the sitting of the Prince and Sovereign Council on 9 September 1838, the widow of the illustrious statesman Antonio Onofri, the noblewoman Teresa Lettimi from Rimini, expressed her will to sell to the State the Onofri's book collection, which had grown within the Onofri dynasty. The Council, believing that the creation of a public library was both laudable and beneficial, decided to purchase the collection of the Onofri family. At the sitting of 28 February 1839, the purchase price was set at 300 scudi and a librarian, Filippo Belluzzi, was appointed to take care of the collection, which had become of public interest. It is not known where the Onofri library was located. Later, in 1846, with the intention of building a hospital, the Prince and Sovereign Council bought Palazzo Valloni, which today houses the State Library and Archive, as well as premises for institutional functions. Together with the beautiful and elegant palace, the Valloni family's book collection was also acquired. Onofri's and Valloni's collections were merged by a Council decree of 28 May 1848 and were entrusted to Belluzzi's custody.



The two collections, which have been kept in Palazzo Valloni since then, were unfortunately not open to the public and perhaps they did not even meet the cultural needs of the time, since they consisted of volumes from past centuries. Among these ancient books 16 printed volumes from the 15th century were found, defined by experts as **incunabula**. Some of them bear the shelf mark **α-III** and an Arabic number. Such abbreviation probably indicates the constitution and organisation of a library collection that was formed at the time of the purchase of Palazzo Valloni, with the merging of the Onofri and Belluzzi-Valloni book collections, to which donations were added that had been in the meantime made to the Republic.