

Business memory in Italy: continuity or dispersion?

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Before talking about the contents of the current issue, we would like to return to the difficulties that face economic stakeholders and the preservation of business archives in our country. We refer to the growing scientific, institutional and organizational backwardness which seems to have stalled further development of these themes somewhere between the 1980s and the 1990s.

Ten years later, we find that the outcome is mostly negative, not because of a lack of new attempts, but because these attempts are isolated and therefore aren't sufficient to spark the evolution of new theories. How can we get out of this impasse?

We can only reiterate what we have written in past issues of this magazine. It is necessary that all interested parties (entrepreneurial associations, archival administrations, university, [Anai](#) and so on) meet in order to confront the problem in all its complexity, and with the awareness that the number of weak points is still greater than the number of successes.

"Culture e Impresa" therefore proposes to once again take up the line of reasoning developed in 2001 during the Milan conference "Gli Archivi economici territoriali nell'articolazione del sistema archivistico nazionale" (The Economical Territorial Archives inside the National Archival System) or even those ideas first proposed in October 1972 during the profitable and still topical "Tavola rotonda sugli archivi delle imprese industriali" (Round Table on Business Archives) organized by "Rassegna degli archivi di stato". This proposal could become a reality in autumn 2007, and to this end we will be pleased to receive our readers' opinions and suggestions.

Several of these pertinent themes are linked to the topics in the articles by Maurizio Fallace (General Director for the Archives of the Department for Cultural Assets) and Maria Grazia Pastura (Director for Service III of the General Archival Administration) published in this fourth issue. It's necessary to admit that "Culture e Impresa" has also been subject to the doldrums that have gripped the Italian business archival field over the last few years. For this reason, from the fifth issue, we will endeavor to take a more incisive stance, from both a national and international point of view.

The situation abroad has improved in some ways, or at least, has not worsened, so there is greater activity to take into account. We refer to North-Central Europe and to North America, but we have also noticed a strengthening of archival initiatives in the East – in China above all, following the International Congress on Archives of Beijing in 1996 – as well as some new countries like Cameroon and others of which we will publish the respective overviews. Moreover, we continue with our reflection on corporate social responsibility (CSR) with an important contribution by the sociologist Luciano Gallino and, along with a number of informative articles, we want to underline the space dedicated to the Fincantieri Shipyard in Muggiano (La Spezia). We have included these articles because they describe an outstanding archival initiative that demonstrates how, through collaborative intervention, it is possible to create meaningful safeguarding procedures, despite a generally static atmosphere in the field of business archives.