

Preserving and Networking in Time of Crisis

By Antonella Bilotto

A few months after the last issue of our journal, maybe we should analyze how this year of financial crisis affected business culture.

Without making any forecast, in these months the priorities of companies and cultural institutions (like Foundations) focused on the preservation of the sources. Valorization activities were restrained also because from the one side there had been some economical cuts and on the other side they tried to avoid colliding with the sacrifices and the drastic cutbacks, also of personnel, which were carried out. Actually, even in financial straits, companies did not give up on communicating their identity, even if through less far-ranging cultural operations. A few days ago, the 8th Week of Business Culture opened, organized by Confindustria and Museimpresa, commonly seen as an “annual showcase” of companies and cultural operators which open their archives and museums, organizing events, guided tours and workshops. But, in this case, we are referring to a strong business culture, represented by industry or big companies which are well-established and can work also in time of crisis. Small realities, commerce for instance, or less privileged sectors like agriculture and manufacturing, in this period suffer silently the recession and lose easily their memories. Quoting a wonderful book recently published by Maurizio Ferraris for Laterza, *Documentalità*, ours is a communication society but, firstly, «it is a recording and inscription society». The philosopher explains «why it is necessary to leave some tracks»; cultural operators, at the moment, are focused on how not to waste them and with which resources.

Always in these days, during the Second National Conference on Archives, the portal of Business Archives was presented, a project guided by the General Management for Archives of the Ministry of Cultural Assets. This is, or at least should become, a place to observe some entrepreneurial paths and a map of business archives in Italy. A solution to restrain the dispersion and to optimize resources would be monitoring and networking. In this sense also our journal, born after the twinning of two institutions and wanting to be an account container, registers a development due to strong and stable cooperation with other institutions working in business culture like Museimpresa and AIPAI: starting from this issue the *Centro on-line Storia e cultura dell'industria* directed by Prof. Luciano Gallino will have a fixed space. On one side, networking to optimize resources and share instruments and knowledge, on another side monitoring the territory to avoid – or check – the dispersion of entire parts of memory, concentrating in particular on the Italian entrepreneurial sector. To carry out these monitoring activities – in distress during a financial crisis – the cooperation among all private and public institutions is fundamental, trying to involve also the associations and the Chambers of Commerce to have a more precise picture with all its different problems and to preserve the largest number possible of the tracks of memory.