

First Results of the Scientific Cooperation between the Ansaldo Foundation and the General Management for the Archives

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Over the last thirty years, the interest of the Archival Administration for business archives has taken shape in many initiatives recently described in an article published in this journal by Paola Carucci. The deliberations of this and other articles have led to the firm conclusion that it is essential to nurture a *different archives culture* within companies; that is, «to support knowledge of the cultural heritage of business *is equal to* promoting the culture of preservation».

In this framework, the longstanding cooperation between the Ansaldo Foundation and the General Management for the Archives, formalized through a specific agreement signed in 2005, is a tangible step towards safeguarding and valorizing the archival patrimony created by the business world in Liguria. In particular, the General Management for Archives pointed out its intention of supporting and valorizing the activity of Ansaldo Foundation, whose mission is to preserve and promote the historical memory of business and labor.

The inventories of three of the Foundation's largest record patrimonies – Finmare Archives, Gerolamo Gaslini Archives, Francesco Manzitti Archives – were published recently under the sponsorship of the General Management for Archives and in close contact with the Servizio III – Studies and research; this represents an initial positive result based on the cooperation between cultural and financial entities and on the sharing of theoretical principles as well as cataloguing and description methods.

The aim of these publishing initiatives is to communicate knowledge of the archival fonds, which were created by companies and economical actors in Liguria, and then acquired and preserved by the Ansaldo Foundation; for example, the Gaslini Archives.

The Ansaldo Foundation supervised the cataloguing of the records and the writing of the inventories while the General Management for Archives contributed its scientific expertise and its longstanding experience in the field of archival publications.

We analyzed several methodological aspects, each arising from the peculiarities of the inventories of the following archival fonds:

- Finmare Archives, produced by a private group set up within a state project for the reorganization and rationalization of Italian maritime services, includes both the records of the holding and of the subsidiary companies it controlled as well as the records of four companies

which, at the beginning, were only affiliated to Finmare, and whose records converged in the holding archives;

- Gaslini Archives collects records concerning the various initiatives of the Ligurian entrepreneur and his philanthropic activity, along with his personal records;
- Francesco Manzitti Archives is a testimony of the various appointments of this person as chairman of important organizations in Italy's economic life following World War II.

These are fonds whose nature and characteristics differ greatly from each other given their extremely diverse provenances:

- A private company that worked on behalf of the Italian State, carrying out an activity of public interest;
- An industrialist among the most important of the 20th century, owner of a group comprised of dozens of subsidiary and affiliated companies, whose industrial and commercial activities went from farming to food production, from banking to real estate and who set up the Children's Hospital Giannina Gaslini, thus offering a service of social utility at the same time;
- A tireless manager like Manzitti, who in the 1950s was one of the managers and associates of many institutions, organizations and associations as well as the Merchant Navy's Governing Council, an important ministry institution.

The first methodological issue was the meticulous planning of the structure of each archives, because the number of records may increase in the future. In particular, for Finmare Archives, the archivist chose open entry numbering, to allow for the addition of possible deposits of records still owned by the company Fintecna, who is currently managing the winding up. The archivist also took into account the different systems of filing and sorting of the paperwork.

In the creation of the series, the archivist had to face the problem of how to represent the complexity of the spheres of involvement of the archives' creators, distinguishing among the various sectors of activity; in particular, for the Gaslini and Manzitti Archives, the archivist strove to restore the imprint given to the management of records by the two leading personalities.

As for the editorial and descriptive criteria, the series *Strumenti* of the Foundation followed the advice of the Study and Research Department of the General Management for Archives, which is extremely pleased by this occasion to speak to a private subject working in the field, in the perspective of creation of common programs among private and public subjects which is the focal point of the National Conference on Archives which took place from 19th to 21st November 2009.

In this perspective, the function of the Archival Administration should increasingly be to provide scientific consultation. It should carry out the role of coordinator of filing and cataloguing activities which, thanks to a growing polycentrism in the preservation of historical archives, can guarantee the use of International standards and facilitate the creation of rational standards for archival description.

To support this function, the Administration is developing an important tool to create one online access to archival databases, including a section dedicated to business archives with a description of the fonds preserved by Ansaldo Foundation.