



CALL FOR PAPERS

«Archives during rebellions and wars».
From the age of Napoleon to the cyber war era

May 19-21, 2021, State Archives of Milan, Milan, Italy

DESCRIPTION

The title of this symposium makes reference to a paper presented on the 29th of November, 1914, at the School of Paleography, Diplomatics and Archival Science of the State Archives of Milan by Giovanni Vittani, who would become the director of that institution in 1920 until 1938. Clearly, a few months after the outbreak of the First World War, this subject was of great topical interest. Vittani discussed the heavy losses suffered by archives in Italy and abroad in the course of history, due to wars, revolutions and revolts. He concluded his speech stating that the only way of minimizing the destruction of archives, apart from international laws and sanctions, would be the development of a true «public interest»: only «when [archives] will be universally known for why they exist, that is, to everyone's advantage, to the harm of no one, it will be inconceivable that anybody would think to endanger them on purpose». But this was wishful thinking, as the State Archives of Milan itself, in the summer of 1943, when Milan was heavily bombed, lost a large quantity of documents.

Archival preservation was always at risk during wars and rebellions, but during the age of Napoleon considerable innovations were introduced in this field, as in many others, and we are still today familiar with them. In earlier regimes, archives either were voluntarily destroyed, or became the spoils of war for practical reasons, such as using their information in order to rule new territories or, vice versa, to deprive enemies of the same information. From the beginning of the 19th century to the present day, new direct or indirect causes of danger for archives have developed. As shown in the book *Archivio del mondo*.

Quando Napoleone confiscò la storia, by Maria Pia Donato, it was Napoleon who wanted to create a «great archives of the world» by transferring to Paris, the capital of the new Empire, documents from all of the occupied countries for the sole purpose of symbolizing the birth of a new universal history. From that time on, the historical and symbolical importance of archives has transformed them into political instruments for confirming or discrediting the legitimacy of wars and rebellions fought in the name of a national identity or an ideology.

Two hundred years after Napoleon's death, the State Archives of Milan wishes to reflect on the theme of archives during wars and rebellions, aware of the fact that Vittani's wish is still far from coming true, and that probably it will never come true. Wars of the third Millennium, which are also fought cybernetically, definitely refute the idea that archives are «to the advantage of all» and, above all, «of harm to no one». Two centuries after the death of the man who dreamed about the creation of a great universal archives, colossal corporations have succeeded in collecting and managing an enormous bulk of data which, as the new «archives of the world», may become powerful instruments for influencing people's thought and actions, even to the point of fostering or stirring up new wars.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Fabio Caffarena, Benedetto Luigi Compagnoni, Antonino De Francesco, Filippo De Vivo, Maria Pia Donato, Luciana Duranti, Pierluigi Feliciati, Andrea Giorgi, Marco Lanzini, Leonardo Mineo, Marco Mondini, Stefano Morosini, Stefano Moscadelli, Raffaele Pittella, Olivier Poncet, Stefano Vitali.

STRUCTURE

The symposium will be structured into 5 sessions, each one dedicated either to an historical period or to one of the themes listed below, depending on the proposals that will be submitted.

Each presentation will last 20 minutes, followed by a 5-minute period for questions and answers.

SUBMISSIONS

The deadline for the submission of proposals is September 30th, 2020. Proposals will consist of an abstract, in English and Italian (400 words maximum), a curriculum vitae showing the speaker's principal areas of expertise and research.

Papers may be presented either in English or in Italian. For speakers who prefer to present in another language, a simultaneous translation will be provided, under the condition that the text of the paper be submitted well in advance of the event. However, an English or Italian translation of the paper will be required for publication in the Proceedings.

Final papers may be presented in English or in Italian, with an indicative deadline for the submission by August 31st, 2021. The subsequent publication of the Proceedings with an international publisher is expected.

E-mail for submissions: convegnoasmi2021@gmail.com.

THEMES

1 - Archives, wars, and diplomacy

- Management, transformation, and creation of archives before, during or after a war;
- How archivists and their profession change during war time;
- Archives of diplomacy.

2 - Secret archives and public archives

- Access to records and archives;
- Archives as instrument of power;
- Archives as instrument for exercising civil rights.

3 - Archives and “Empire”, Archives and “Nation”, Archives and “De-colonization”

- Archives as symbols of power;
- Archives as identity;
- Archives during crises, revolts and transitional periods.

4 - Archives as “Instruments” and Archives as “Monuments”

- The retention and/or disposition of archives in order to build an historical narrative;
- The construction of archives (collections of autographs, correspondence, letters, oral sources, diaries, etc.; community archives);
- Dismembered, dispersed, destroyed, migrated and removed archives / archives preserved deliberately or accidentally.

5 - Archives and technology

- Archives as technological products and instruments;
- Reliability and authenticity of archives in the era of cyber security and artificial intelligence;
- Data use and control.