The heritage

In 1887 a general provincial archive was founded in Reggio Emilia. It was later transformed into a State Record Office by a Royal Decree of 20 March 1892.

One of the oldest collections stored by the Institute is the town's historical municipal archive, which includes some papers dating back to the time of the independent communes. One of the main characteristics of the sections from the Reggio commune, in addition to their great wealth, is the remarkable continuity: almost all of them start in the 13th or 14th centuries, and many of them finish with the end of the Old Regime.

The articles regarding foreign policy date back as far as 882; one of the most important items is the *Liber Grossus Antiquus or Liber Pax Constantiae* (12th century to 1352), with copied documents from 962.

The Carteggio del Reggimento (Correspondence of the Government), which came from the Office that represented noble power in Reggio Emilia and was generally headed by a governor, has papers that date back to 1372 (the era of the Visconti reign), and continue through the period under the rule of the Este family until 1796, including records of the fleeting occupations by other states that the Reggio Emilia area experienced from time to time.

With the *Atti di Protocollo Generale (General Record Files)*, the collection documents the activities of the Commune from Napoleonic times until 1897.

In addition to the archive of Reggio Emilia, those of the communes of Scandiano (1429-1893), Brescello (1503-1902) and Carpineti (1807 to the 20th century) are also of great significance.

There is also great continuity in the documents from the archives of judicial bodies, starting from the communal ones (*Curiae of the town* and *Curiae of the duchy*), moving on to the *Civil Court*, the *Court of Civil and Criminal Justice* and the Napoleonic *Judicatures of Peace*, continuing with the *Court of Justice* and the *Giusdicenze* of the Restoration, up to the contemporary archives of the *Civil and Criminal Court*, the Reggio *Court of Assize* and the records of the abolished *Magistrate's Courts*: a collection of documents that starts in 1271 and stretches, for the moment, as far as 1946.

Of equal importance are the collections from the Offices that have represented the central government in Reggio: from the Prefecture of the Crostolo district to the Provincial Government, then the Ministry of the Interior's delegation, and on to the Prefecture after unification.

The archives that document the work of notaries in the province start in 1365 and continue to the end of the 19th century, while the financial records start with *1783's Atti della Ducal Ferma Generale (Records of the General Ducal Indirect Tax Service)* and go as far as the contemporary District Direct Tax Offices and the Revenue Office, taking in the important sections of cadastral surveys and land registers (1704-1985).

In addition, there are the collections of the *Guilds of Arts and Trades*, whose section includes the charters of almost all the guilds in Reggio Emilia (those for the Guild of Wool and Cloth date back to 1390), and the charters of the professional colleges (those of the *College of Notaries* start from 1274).

Deserving of special note are the archives of charitable works and institutions and the hospitals of Reggio Emilia. The oldest of these is the *Istituto dei Santi Pietro e Matteo e Opera pia Calcagni* (1198-1960).

The Record Office holds valuable collections from dissolved religious associations. Two outstanding examples of these monasteries and confraternities are the *monastery of San Tommaso* (943-1783) and that of *Santi Pietro & Prospero*, whose archive, with copied documents from as far back as 594, includes the oldest original in the Institute: a pergameneous deed of gift from 806.

An important role is also played by archives of people and families. Among the oldest are that of the *Cassoli-Guastavillani* house (1063 to the 19th century), and the records of the *Malaguzzi-Valeri* family (1325 to the

19th century), to which Ludovico Ariosto’s mother Daria belonged.

Of the various exceptional elements in the Institute’s wealth of documentary heritage, worthy of particular mention is the archive of the town’s *Jewish University*. Its starting date in 1413 coincides with the call from the Commune inviting Jews to Reggio Emilia to open banks lending money at interest. The collection covers the period to 1875.