

## ARCHIVE OF THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FLORENCE

*Archivist:* Alyson Price

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### ACCESS

Library opening times  
Monday to Friday 10-18.30  
Archive: by appointment only

## ASSOCIAZIONE NAZIONALE ARCHIVISTICA ITALIANA SEZIONE TOSCANA

<http://soalinux.comune.fi.it/anai/anai.htm>

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## QUADERNI DI ARCHIMEETINGS

N° 9

COORDINAMENTO DI  
CATERINA DEL VIVO  
M. RAFFAELLA DE GRAMATICA

*Con il contributo di:*



ENTE  
CASSA DI RISPARMIO  
DI FIRENZE



ASSOCIAZIONE NAZIONALE  
ARCHIVISTICA ITALIANA  
SEZIONE TOSCANA



SISTEMA  
DOCUMENTARIO INTEGRATO  
DELL'AREA FIORENTINA



EDIZIONI POLISTAMPA



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*Archimeetings*

It has often been said that the unique quality of Italy's artistic heritage is not only due to the splendid collections of works of art preserved in the country's great museums, but also to the fact that the entire territory is full of works of art, monuments, and beautiful landscapes – suggesting that Italy is a 'museum' in itself. The same can be said for the less visible but equally important cultural heritage represented by its archives and historical documents, and in particular those which are not preserved in the huge State Archives. Tuscany is the region of Italy in which there are the greatest quantity and variety of archives. Tuscany is also the region in which the scientific methods used to order and describe archives – the 'historical method' – was first theorized and put into practice. It now has some extremely important centres where new technology is being used.

Since 2002 the Tuscan Section of the Associazione Nazionale Archivistica Italiana (ANAI) has been organising a series of 'Archimeetings', visits to those lesser known archives in the region. These events take place in the many and diverse spaces where these archives are to be found together with the owners, the curators and the keepers of these archives, and also with the administrative officials of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali who oversee the safe-keeping of these archives. The 'Quaderni' or booklets of the Archimeetings developed out of these events.

Beginning in 2006 the Tuscan Section of ANAI has held a special series of meetings titled 'I Colloqui' in collaboration with the Regione Toscana (Archivi regionali, Centro di documentazione Culturale della legalità democratica) and the Scuola di Archivistica Paleografia e Diplomatica 'Anna Maria Enriques Agnoletti' of the State Archives of Florence. These new meetings are intended for the discussion of themes of great interest concerning the relationship between archives and the new 'information society'. Professional archivists play an important role not only in defending the rights of individual citizens and institutions, but also in the protection of the nature and organization of public archives faced with the changes caused by new technology. These are themes which interest not only archivists but should also involve a wider public - administrators, scholars of contemporary history, and individual citizens.

We would like to thank all those who have helped us during the publication of these 'Quaderni' and especially (for those to be published in 2006), the Ente Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze, and the Assessorato alla Cultura del Comune di Firenze – SDIAF. But above all we would like to thank those who read these publications, and through them will come to consider archives as no longer dusty storerooms removed from reality, but as the living testimony of a past which we must continue to investigate in order to understand the present and give a direction to our lives.

FRANCESCA KLEIN  
*President of the Tuscan Section of ANAI*

*Cover picture*  
Sala Ferragamo

These "Quaderni", the result of the experiences encountered at *Archimeetings*, aim to summarise in written form the most interesting themes, topics and problems which came to light during the visits to public and private archives. The "Quaderni di Archimeetings" are intended for all those who encounter these collections for the first time, and to that wider and wider public and historians in all fields who are showing an increasing interest in archives, in order to investigate the historical background, or in the study of wider cultural questions. The texts are intentionally simple, aiming to stimulate curiosity as well as to suggest ways of discovering the past. The texts are written for those who are not specifically occupied in the archiving field, but they are written by experts in order to guarantee the correctness of their content, and also to stress the professionalism of the archivist, who, through the profession is able to explain and to make available to others this precious cultural heritage. Following the most recent research carried out in the discipline, the information on each archive is structured around three important areas: those who produced the archival documentation (i.e. foundations, families, or individuals); the physical sites where the archives are conserved; and a description of their main areas of content. However the "Quaderno" is not intended to be a tourist guide or an heraldic encyclopedia: the format we have chosen permits just a quick sketch of the owner's history and of the places where the archives are kept. It is to be hoped that these "Quaderni" will stimulate research, and will provide the information necessary in order to access these archives either personally or with the help of an archivist who will be able to indicate specific areas of study.

CATERINA DEL VIVO      M. RAFFAELLA DE GRAMATICA

*The visit to the Archive and collections of the British Institute took place on 26 November 2004*

This was a particularly stimulating visit in which we were introduced not only to an existing cultural institution but also to its history and a very special archival universe. This gave us a useful comparison in the methodology of description and modes of arrangement of these 'personal' archives that often pose significant problems in both terminology and methodology. We were welcomed and guided through the archives by **Alyson Price** who has been responsible for identifying, processing and cataloging the holdings in the Archive of the British Institute of Florence since 2001. Alyson Price is an historian and has worked as a teacher, university administrator and archivist. She has a particular interest in nineteenth and early twentieth century Italy and in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century India. She has produced a new edition of Julia Maitland's *Letters from Madras*, first published in 1843.