

## A PROJECT TO REARRANGE AND INVENTORY THE HISTORICAL-SCIENTIFIC ARCHIVE OF THE TURIN - PINO TORINESE ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY

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The discovery and exploitation of a very interesting documentary patrimony. Objects attained and prospects for the future.

The project to rearrange and inventory the historical-scientific archive of the Turin - Pino Torinese Astronomical Observatory was undertaken by Valeria Calabrese in 1992.

The stocks waiting to be rearranged were jumbled together in higgledy-piggledy fashion in the cellars of the Observatory. They included documentary material referring to the last two centuries in the life of the Observatory, from the period in which it first moved to Palazzo Madama (in 1822, from the Academy of Sciences where it had been housed since its foundation by Abbot T. Valperga di Caluso in 1790), up to the present day. No inventories existed nor, at first glance, were there traces of any previous rearrangements.

Most of the archive material, which, laid out in a line, would extend for a length of about 25 metres, was classified document by document. This time-consuming operation was necessary to recognise and attribute the material to single sets. The type of documentation housed in astronomical Observatories has very distinctive characteristics, the example of Milan Brera<sup>1</sup> alone being far too isolated to serve as an exhaustive general model for other Observatories.

Virtually all the documentary sets which form the backbone of the archive in question have now been identified. Worthy of special mention is the recovery of two archives within the archive: documents referring to the Italian Astronomical Society (founded by Giovanni Boccardi in 1906 and wound up after just seven years on account of internal rifts) and to the Urania Society, which Boccardi founded in 1911 on abandoning the Astronomical Society.

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<sup>1</sup> In Italy out of a total of twelve Astronomical Observatories only the Brera Observatory has a p: arranged, reference archive.

The natural outcome of the archive rearrangement and inventory work will be the publication and networking of the inventory. In this way, what is still a relatively little known document typology will be made available to all those wishing to make use of it (scientists, local historians, institutional historians, school children working on special projects).

The meeting on 'The problems of the recovery and development of the instrumental, archive and bibliographical store of historical interest of Italian Astronomical and Astrophysical Observatories' held in Rome on April 27 1993 suggested that proper protection and development of the historical heritage of Observatories will help to enhance the sensitivity of the general public, attract people to the observatories themselves and foster the growth of numerous cultural initiatives around them. For example, a museum containing early astronomical instruments has recently been set up in Turin and a catalogue is to be compiled of the antique books conserved in the library.