



A TREASURE-TROVE OF ANTIQUE PAPERS IS REDISCOVERED IN FABRIANO

The Gianfranco Fedrigoni Foundation ISTOCARTA acquires the Augusto Zonghi Collection of historic paper samples

The remarkable generosity of a sustaining Board Member has made it possible for ISTOCARTA, the Gianfranco Fedrigoni Foundation, to fulfill a longstanding wish to acquire the storied collection of antique papers assembled by Augusto Zonghi (1840-1916), mathematics and science professor, and illustrious filigranologist of Fabriano.

The Zonghi collection has long been held in high regard by researchers and paper historians around the world, and was exhibited as early as 1900 at the Universal International Exposition of Paris in 1900, where it was pronounced 'unique in the world' by the Judiciary Committee and acknowledged as a valuable reference source for the study of paper made in the Fabriano area, one of them most historically important papermaking centers of Europe.

Upon Augusto's death in 1916, his collection came into the possession of the Colombo Baravelli family of Fabriano, who carefully kept it together and preserved it until the present day.

After several mid-20th century attempts were made to purchase the Augusto Zonghi papers and take them out of the country, Adriano Casciola, then-director of the Fabriano city library, persuaded the Ministry of Public Education to declare the collection of 'significant historical and cultural importance' and issue a decree preventing their sale outside of Italy. The decree was drawn up and officially signed by the Ministry on September 17, 1951, thereby preventing any national or international entity from removing the Zonghi collection to a location outside of Italy. After the publication of the limited edition volume *Zonghi's Watermarks* by the Paper Publications Society of Hilversum, Holland in 1953, interest in the collection by librarians, scholars and historians has continued to grow, both outside and inside of Italy. Organizations such as the Labarre Foundation of the Netherlands, the Library of Congress of Washington D.C. in the USA, and the Istituto Centrale per il Restauro e la Conservazione del Patrimonio Archivistico e Librario (ICRCPAL) of Rome have all communicated the importance of accessibility of the collection of original papers to interested researchers from all over the world.

Recently, the Gianfranco Fedrigoni Foundation made an offer to acquire the collection from its present owners, and a 60-day waiting period transpired while the right of first refusal by the competent authority



was in effect. Upon completion of this step, the extraordinary announcement was made that the path was clear for the acquisition of the collection by the non-profit organization ISTOCARTA.

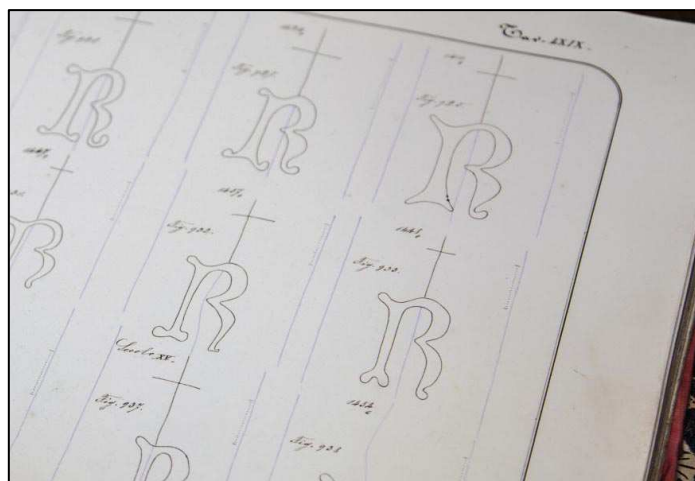
The Augusto Zonghi Collection consists of ten large archival cases containing 198 folders holding original fragments and whole sheets of historic paper samples from Fabriano the earliest of which date from the thirteenth century. The paper samples were collected by Prof. Augusto from local archival documents and illustrated by his brother Can. Aurelio Zonghi, a celebrated figure of Fabriano. The papers have since been kept in a custom antique wooden chest.

An album of tracings of the "Watermarks from the historic mills of Fabriano" collected by Professor Augusto Zonghi accompanies the collection. Zonghi carefully reproduced 1887 watermarks in outline form organizing the images in 134 Tables. The watermarks were traced from 3,372 paper samples examined and manually described by Zonghi in a register, where he recorded the following information: catalogue number, date of the document, description of the watermark design, number of chain lines present in the sheet, dimensions of the whole sheet, and provenance and reference information regarding the source of the fragment or full sheet. This data establishes essential parameters for the individual watermarks (when present) and the historical and technical characteristics of the individual paper sheets.

In summary, the collection is of inestimable value for paper historians, librarians, conservators, collectors and other interested scholars, that will only increase in importance with the additional information certain to be revealed by further study from numerous perspectives: historical, technical and scientific.

With this important acquisition, the 'Zonghi Collection' will take its place among other famous collections of paper samples, including those of Aurelio Zonghi, Charles-Moise Briquet (friend to both Zonghi brothers), and Gerhard Piccard, as well as online collections, such as the Corpus Chartarum Italicarum (CCI), a project begun in 2006 by the Istituto Centrale e per la Patologia el Libro of Rome, (today known as the Istituto Centrale per il Restauro e la Conservazione del Patrimonio Archivistico e Librario - ICRCPAL) and the Bernstein 'Memory of Paper' project supported by the European Commission.

The Gianfranco Fedrigoni Foundation ISTOCARTA intends to initiate the digital scanning of the papers in the collection, enabling them to be eventually added to the existing European network of paper sample collections. In addition, the Foundation aims to support Fabriano as a center for historical paper studies.



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