Business history in Italy and the new digital frontiers: archives and IT sources

Amedeo Lepore

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[1. The Italian situation of IT sources for business history]

Over the last decade or so, business history – like many other disciplines – has had to come to terms with far-reaching innovations in scientific knowledge, communication and information, brought about by the arrival and rapid diffusion of the World Wide Web. These changes have had even greater impact in a field like archival science that uses a complex and stratified memory. For this reason, it is extremely important to analyze the current state of Italian IT sources for business history.

Massimiliano Grandi states that Italy, in comparison to other countries, is not so far behind the times for business archives on the Net as it is in other fields. This evaluation, although made recently, does not totally reflect the technological progress of recent years. Grandi, in his article, pointed out a “great difference in numbers of Italian archival websites in comparison with those of countries like the USA, the UK or Germany”, which become “less unfavorable for our country” if we count “only business archives”. In fact, “in other industrialized nations too, the websites for [business archives] institutions appear to number far less than websites for the archives of public organizations, universities and associations”. Moreover, “in this field Italy’s lag behind other countries is less noticeable, maybe because on the Net the affinity between companies and their territories partially compensates for the differences among various national institutions in being able take advantage of the opportunities offered by IT”.

1 M. Grandi, Gli archivi italiani d’impresa su internet, in “Imprese e storia”, n. 21, January-June 2000, pp. 154-155. It is also possible to refer to the more general works on primary sources on the Net, including the beginnings of the development of digital archives: see M. Guercio, Gli archivi dei italiani e la sfida
Nevertheless, the Italian situation shows a lack of proportion. Apart from a few excellent examples, our business archives websites are lagging behind the continuous evolution that is taking place internationally. The distance widens if we examine the portals and the institutional resources, both scientific and academic, that are globally available. In this field, Italy is still at a starting point\(^2\) and requires a great deal of general coordination and follow-up. Grandi conducted a census of eleven business archives websites in 2000\(^3\) (Archivio Storico dell’Italgas, Archivio Storico del Banco di Napoli, Archivio Storico della Banca Commerciale Italiana, Archivio Fotografico della Fratelli Alinari, Archivio Storico Elettronico dell’IRI, Archivio Storico dell’Istituto Luce, Archivio Storico di Telecom, Archivio Storico della Piaggio, Archivio Storico dell’Azienda Trasporti Consorziali di Bologna, Archivio Storico della Cassa di Risparmio di Bologna, Archivio Storico dell’Ansaldo) and current results show a proliferation of electronic sources, which is a positive development in terms of number, but also quality.

From 1980, when the first historical business archives was founded—that of the "Raggruppamento Ansaldo"\(^4\)—up to now, there has been remarkable development of this field in Italy, also in terms of innovative source processing. Nico De Ianni on *L’archivio storico IRI su Internet (IRI historical archives on the Net)*\(^5\) explains the differences of context in the field of digital applications, or to be more precise, the number of IT generations in just the last few years. He wrote: "What dismays us is the sense of impotence we feel by just

\(^2\) Moreover, Grandi himself recognized that "in Italy there is no institution such as the UK Business Archives Council which, formed in 1934, now has its own website and a mailing list through which everyone interested in business archives, and above all, their personnel, can discuss themes of interest." (M. Grandi, *Gli archivi italiani di impresa su internet*, cit., p. 155). For the website see The Business Archives Council, <http://www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk>.

\(^3\) See M. Grandi, *Gli archivi italiani di impresa su internet*, p. 143.


thinking of the imbalance between the potential of the instrument and its actual use"\(^6\). At present, that imbalance has diminished considerably and, in contrast to a few years ago, the loss is the effect of the huge quantity of sources available on the Net, at risk of shipwrecking in a wide and unstable (virtual) sea.

Despite several advances and the growth of the usable information, business culture has not yet been sufficiently publicized to the public consciousness in our country. There is also is a lack of systematic support – apart from individual initiatives, some of which are really excellent – from public institutions and private operators in the field. This sort of commitment should aim at a strong development in the availability of innovative techniques, suitable materials and a larger record heritage for study and research. Moreover, greater effort should be made to modernize archives and IT sources for business history, as Grandi described simply and clearly in his article: “What could be decisive for the development of both archival websites (whether business and not) and archives in general, is the ability to promote the image of archives in our societies.”\(^7\) It means, in short, to improve the quality of the Italian archival offer, focusing on both current and potential consumers who use these records sources. We should pay particular attention to “pilot experiences” that have been carried out in the other countries and have engendered a virtuous circle of cultural growth, improvement of services, development of electronic sources and a significant increase in research possibilities. To do this, we can use a new category of complex sources; the so-called “meta-sources”\(^8\), that allow users to also handle the problems of updating and innovating the existing archival supports in a framework of organic arrangement and unification of the sources. As Andrea Zorzi proposed: “We can – and maybe we should – start talking of meta-sources. This term was used for the first time in 1992 from a French medievalist Jean-Philippe Genet (Source, MétaSource, Texte, Histoire, in Storia & multimedia, edited by F. Bocchi and P. Denley, Bologna, 1994, pages 3-17) regarding the complex totality of texts and databases that a scholar potentially has access to, even when working alone with a computer. Since then

\(^6\) Ibdem, p. 95.

\(^7\) M. Grandi, Gli archivi italiani di impresa su internet, p. 155.

\(^8\) By “meta-source”, we mean “the new configuration of an intermediate dimension in the hierarchy of historical documentation constituted by the creation of new sources (and at the same time of databases that provide new instruments for access to the reproduction of the original) from the historian through the IT processing of texts, images and data” (A. Zorzi, Medievisti nelle reti. La mutazione telematica e la pratica della ricerca storica, in “Quaderni medievali”, n. 44, December 1997, also in Medioevo presso in rete: Una guida selezionata alle risorse telematiche per lo studio e per la ricerca, <http://www.storia.unifi.it/_pim/AIM/risorse.htm>, <http://www.storia.unifi.it/_PIM/AIM/qr1.htm>).
nobody has used this notion, perhaps because it referred to the mere IT dimension of single databases, a perspective that nowadays seems completely outdated in the current networking world. As a matter of fact, Genet wrote before the creation of the Web and the intensive development of hypermedia.

In contrast, I believe that the concept of meta-sources can be developed in reference to archives that are available online, which is the new typology of intangible documentation that historians can use. This notion links the reproduction of records as images with transcriptions or critical editions, informative instruments (document summaries, archival descriptions and inventories, and so on), databases, bibliographies, essays and other miscellaneous materials, as well as the array of continuously evolving research instruments (search engines and special software)\(^9\). It is from this new threshold that we may begin a thorough analysis of our Italian virtual resources.

2. The Italian portals of business history

The situation of the Italian IT sources for business history and archives is extremely diversified starting from the meta-sources represented by portals. Although we do find some significant sources, the Italian situation cannot be compared with that of other countries that have made the portals a distinguishing instrument for access to IT sources, especially scientific ones.

One interesting example is the complex website of the national archival system\(^10\) that has dedicated a section to the "Italian portal of the world archival resources on the Net"\(^11\), with a

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10. See Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali. Direzione Generale per gli Archivi, <http://archivi.beniculturali.it/>. In this portal, it is also possible to retrieve some extremely interesting materials for the on-line archives such as, for example, those included in "Forum" (see II Forum di ARCHIVI, <http://archivi.beniculturali.it/forum/>). But, more in general, it is possible to retrieve a detailed distribution of the sources and some useful tips for the use of archival resources through the sections dedicated to the archival administration (see Amministrazione Archivistica Italiana, <http://archivi.beniculturali.it/organ.html>), to the public documentation heritage (see II patrimonio documentario statale sul Web, <http://archivi.beniculturali.it/Patrimonio/ricerca.html>), to the more relevant norms (see Normativa, <http://wwwdb.archivi.beniculturali.it/>), to the research instruments on line (see Strumenti, <http://archivi.beniculturali.it/strumenti.html>) and to the library (see Biblioteca di Archivi, <http://archivi.beniculturali.it/notbiblio.html>).
specific section on Italian business and bank archives\textsuperscript{12}. This section of the website includes several links limited to some of the most significant archival resources of the Italian network. At present, this portal is undergoing reconstruction. In addition, among the websites of the Superintendence offices linked to the national archival system, several interesting regional initiatives stand out: the region of Lazio has produced a \textit{Guida agli archivi economici a Roma e nel Lazio} (Guide to economic archives in Rome and in Lazio), with information concerning the archives of the credit institutions, private economic operators, joint stock companies and ex government-controlled companies, public agencies and ex municipal companies\textsuperscript{13}. Piedmont and Valle d’Aosta have a web page dedicated to the inventories of economic archives\textsuperscript{14}; Campania includes the inventories of the historical archives of the Banco di Napoli\textsuperscript{15}; Puglia describes activities related to the stewardship of the archives of health authorities, transport agencies, corporations and city-owned enterprises.


\textsuperscript{12} See ARCHIVI - RINVII / in Italia / imprese e banche, <http://archivi.beniculturali.it/link/43.html>. Another section with references to business history is the one concerning the foundations (see ARCHIVI - RINVII / in Italia / fondazioni, <http://www.archivi.beniculturali.it/link/42.html>.

\textsuperscript{13} See Soprintendenza Archivistica per il Lazio, <http://archivi.beniculturali.it/SARM/attivita.html>; Soprintendenza Archivistica per il Lazio, Guida agli archivi economici a Roma e nel Lazio, <http://archivi.beniculturali.it/SARM/Archivi_economici/Framese2ArchiviEconomici.htm>


charitable institutions, insurance companies, social security agencies, and credit institutions. Moreover, Veneto has, among the ongoing projects funded by the Direzione Generale per gli Archivi, the recovery of the historical archives of the company “Lanerossi”. Sardegna describes in detail a group of private archives – including several belonging to entrepreneurs and enterprises –, and shows an exhibition of 2005, put together with great care, with photographs of mines, and has a photo gallery with images obtained by the private archives.

A further website linked to the national archival system is the “Sistema informativo unificato per le Soprintendenze archivistiche (SIUSA)” (Unified IT system for the archival superintendence offices), which “proposes itself as the main access portal for research on public and private non-governmental archival heritage that is preserved outside the State Archives”. It is an broad overall source, well structured in its complexity and innovative so that: “the system of web usage of the archival material is the public part of a system of

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19 Sistema informativo unificato per le Soprintendenze archivistiche, <http://siusa.signum.snc.it/>. See D. Bondielli (edited by), SIUSA – Sistema informativo Unificato per le Soprintendenze Archivistiche. Genesi e sviluppi di un progetto, in “Bollettino d’Informazioni del Centro di Ricerche Informatiche per i Beni Culturali”, XI, n. 2, 2001; M. G. Pastura, D. Iozzia, D. Spano, M. Taglioli (a cura di), Il Sistema informativo unificato per le soprintendenze archivistiche, in “Archivi & Computer”, n. 2, 2004. As specified in the home page, the website: “was created as an open system from which and towards which it is possible to export and import information collected through the other systems. In SIUSA there is the description of archival structures with their articulated sequences, the subjects (organizations, individuals and families) who produced the documentation in the course of their activity, and those who preserve the archives. Moreover, there are general schedules that give historical, institutional and archival information helpful to understand the context. In the system there are the data acquired through previous censuses and inventories, national and local, carried out by the archival Superintendence offices at different times and with different analytical degrees. The necessary standardization obeys to locally consolidated descriptive traditions. The data are updated and integrated progressively. SIUSA is a perfect context for the presentation of thematic projects coming from the cooperation of different parties.”
description, storage and management of the data organized according to an analytic and modular conceptual model. The interface was realized entirely using Open Source instruments".\(^{20}\) The website is divided into three major categories: archival complexes, producers and keepers\(^{21}\), each allowing a form of research with various options.\(^{22}\) The query inside every classification can be executed according to a series of fields that allow a choice from an extensive list of subjects: state, region, territorial public body, functional territorial body, enterprise, credit institution, insurance company, social security agency; aid societies and charitable institutions; health authorities; instruction and research organizations; cultural, recreational, sport and tourist organization; political party, labor organization; professional roll; organization and association of the Catholic church; organization and association of other creeds; person or family.

SIUSA also facilitates research on economic organizations or enterprises and on credit institutions, aid societies and charitable institutions and gives significant results\(^{23}\) providing a


\(^{21}\) The three different sectors correspond respectively to “fonds and groups of fonds, with their internal divisions. The description of the archival heritage is hierarchic: to a first schedule related to a fond or to a complex of funds are linked those describing all its subdivisions (subfond/section; series; subseries)”; to “institutions and bodies, people and families that carrying on their activities produced, accumulated, preserved and used the described archival documentation.”; to “private and public bodies, people or families preserving and making the archives described available” (SIUSA: Sistema informativo unificato per le Soprintendenze archivistiche, <http://siusa.sism.it/index2.html>).

\(^{22}\) The archival groups envisage two types of guided query, through a “list of the fonds”, regarding records that constitute aggregates of fonds or fonds, and a “general list of the complexes” regarding archival groups at all levels (complexes of fonds, fonds, sections, series and subseries); moreover, it is possible to research through “record typologies”. The producers provide three kinds of guided query, “organizations”, “individuals”, and “families”; then there are general search keys related to the “historic and institutional contexts”, “general institutional profiles” and “territorial fields”. The preserving subjects have two kinds of guided query: “region” and “typology”. Every schedule resulting from the research contains – when complete - the following data: title, chronological details, consistency, archival history, records description, ordering, research instruments, subject that produced the documentation and the subject that preserves it.

\(^{23}\) Carrying out a research on these two subjects it is possible to pick out 67 sources referring to economic organizations or enterprises and 124 sources referring to credit institutions, insurance companies and social security agencies in the category “CompleSSI archivisti – Lista dei fondi” (“Archival complexes – List of the fonds” Typology: producer), 89 sources referring to economic organizations or enterprises and 150 sources referring to credit institutions, insurance companies and social security agencies in the category “CompleSSI archivisti – Lista dei fondi” (“Archival complexes – List of the fonds” Typology: producer); 354 sources referring to economic organizations or enterprises and 551 sources referring to credit institutions, insurance companies and social security agencies in the category “CompleSSI archivisti – Lista generale dei compleSSI” (“Archival complexes – General list of the complexes” Typology: keeper); 188 sources referring to economic organizations or enterprises and 668 sources referring to credit institutions, insurance companies and social security agencies in the category “CompleSSI archivisti – Lista generale dei compleSSI” (“Archival complexes –
series of brief descriptions of the history of every company and a multitude of files regarding
the archival documentation (complex of fonds, fonds, sections, series and subseries) of
partnerships and companies — with particular reference to the administrative and an accounting
records, balances, personnel and deeds of incorporation —, of cooperatives and syndicates,
commercial farms, benefit societies, banks, savings banks, pawnshops — with special attention
to the minutes of the administrative bodies, company books, accounting records and deeds of
incorporation —, insurance companies.24

Other Italian portals like “Archivi & Futuro”25, are the result of a demanding project started
by Telecom Italia in collaboration with the Associazione Archivio Storico Olivetti, the
Archivio Storico di Telecom Italia and the Archivio Storico di Pirelli that made their wealth
of documentation and knowledge available in order to provide the website with enough texts,
images and materials. This new source claims the ambitious goal of “relaunching the
industrial culture” and “creating a reference that is reliable and accurate, but at the same
time simple and usable for those who want to know the history of the companies that have had

24 See Sistema informativo unificato per le Soprintendenze archivistiche, Complessi archivistici — Lista dei fondi,
http://giua.signum.ms.it/cgi-bin/RSOLSearchSiusa.pl?op=search&entitlevel=11&additionalfield=tipologia&additionalvalue=fondo%20
-e%20%20iperfondo&ecclesia=NO&selectby=SI&tipofondi=liste; Sistema informativo unificato per le Soprintendenze
archivistiche, Complessi archivistici — Lista generale dei complessi,
http://giua.signum.ms.it/cgi-bin/RSOLSearchSiusa.pl?op=search&entitlevel=11&additionalfield=tipologia&ecclesia=NO&selectby=SI
&tipofondi=fondi; Sistema informativo unificato per le Soprintendenze archivistiche, Soggetti produttori — Enti,
http://giua.signum.ms.it/cgi-bin/RSOLSearchSiusa.pl?useinternal=1&selectbycompositiondate=1&op=search&livello=1&func=searchprod
&entitlevel=21&additionalfield=&additionalvalue=&language=ita&ecclesia=NO&selectby=SI; Sistema
informativo unificato per le Soprintendenze archivistiche, Soggetti conservatori — Tipologia,
http://giua.signum.ms.it/tipologia_frame_center.html; http://giua.signum.ms.it/cgi-bin/RSOLSearchSiusa.pl?op=search&livello=1&func=searchconservatore&entitlevel=8&additionalfield=ti
pologia&additionalvalue=ente%20economico/imprese&language=ita&ecclesia=NO&selectby=SI;
http://giua.signum.ms.it/cgi-bin/RSOLSearchSiusa.pl?op=search&livello=1&func=searchconservatore&entitlevel=8&additionalfield=ti
pologia&additionalvalue=ente%20%20credito,%20assicurativo,%20previdenziale&language=ita&ecclesia
=NO&selectby=SI.

25 See Archivi & Futuro. Conoscere il passato per progettare il futuro, http://www.archiviefuturo.it/cgi-
bin/portali/aef/frontend/index.jsp.
(and still have) an important role in the life of Italian industry. The portal is divided into nine subject areas: technology and research, products and services, work, advertising, business history, people, social activities, cultural initiatives and industrial architectures. What’s more, part of the site is dedicated to the three archives of its founding companies, with an essential description of the primary sources and a link to two historical websites (Olivetti and Telecom). Finally, the section dedicated to the innovations of the portal is extremely useful. It offers a variety of information and updates on business history. At the same time, the search engine is effective, allowing the user to surf the website to acquire the available documentation.

Another innovative portal is the one of the “Centro per la ricerca e lo sviluppo di Metodologie e Applicazioni per gli Archivi Storici (MAAS)” aimed at “creating a valuable virtual headquarters for research concerning the treatment of information repositories. This portal is directed towards individuals and organizations who wish to study descriptive standards, instruments and technical solutions, and to the training of specialized personnel”, developing the analysis “of technologically advanced applications for the preservation, ordering, digitalization and consultation of archival heritages of different natures (paper, iconographic,

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audiovisual and so on) owned by private and public institutions. The Centro pioneered many initiatives including: the creation of the IRI Archivio Storico Elettronico (Electronic Historical Archives) (the ASEI project and a second project which was the natural evolution of the previous one), the computerization of the cinema archives of the Istituto Luce, the electronic treatment of the four volumes of the *Guida generale degli Archivi di Stato*, the creation of an XML database of the *Guida agli Archivi delle Camere di Commercio Italiane*, the planning and the establishment of systems for the IT management of the records (and images) for some important archives (such as the Archivio Cinematografico della Cineteca Nazionale and the Archivio Storico dell'IMI), the starting of the retrospective retrieval of the inventory of the Archivio Storico del Crediop and of the inventory of the Archivio Storico dell'Intersind. From the MAAS website, it is possible to connect to some specific research projects ("Labirinti", "European CHoronic On-line (ECHO)", "May Day") and to the activities of specialized training of the Centro.

The database "Imita.db", a project realized by the University of Bologna and the University of Florence represents the Archivio Storico delle Società per Azioni Italiane (Historical archives of the Italian joint stock companies) and it contains the "digital transposition of a serial source formed by a series of volumes published from 1908 to 1926 edited by Credito Italiano, and

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32 The Centro MAAS, <http://www.maas.ccr.it/presentazione/ilcentro.html>. Moreover, it is necessary to underline that IRI, Finmeccanica, RAI, Istituto Luce, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, Dipartimento di Economia della III Università di Roma and Soprintendenza Archivistica per il Lazio agreed to the statement of intent for the setting up of the Centro MAAS.


35 See Centro MAAS, Progetti di Ricerca, <http://www.maas.ccr.it/fr_progettirimcerca.html>; Centro MAAS, Formazione, <http://www.maas.ccr.it/fr_formazione.html>. The portal explains that: "the Progetto Labirinti (...) aims at the interworking, the shared access and the technological independence of the IT systems of management and consultation of the national archival heritage, starting from the records repositories of the organizations involved in the experimentation". The "Progetto ECHO (European CHoronic On-line), funded by the European Community within the fifth general program (...) aims to create an open infrastructure for the distribution on the web of digital services and contents regarding audiovisual records (newsreels, documentary films and so on) with a cultural and historical value gathering the materials of some of the most important European audiovisual archives" and the "progetto MayDayNet" aims at "establishing a connection between the complex and articulated inheritance of the 1st May and the current Europe through the languages and the technologies of the IT society". Among the training programs, the project "Labirinti" gave life to a really interesting website. (See Centro MAAS, Labirinti - Archivi, Labirinti Della Memoria, <http://www.maas.ccr.it/labirinti>., <http://www.maas.ccr.it/labirinti/framehomepagepresentazione.htm>).
then from 1928 by the Associazione fra le società italiane per azioni (Asipa) (association of the Italian joint stock companies).36

This source gives significant information on companies (regarding registration of vital statistics and accounting) and on their management (administrators and corporations) regarding all the joint stock companies listed on the Stock Exchange and all those located in Italy with “a corporate capital exceeding a fixed limit that was subject to change from year to year”37. To do this, it is possible to carry out an online study in the database using various criteria: the company name, the ISTAT code, the founding year, the surname of the administrator and the corporate name, the ISTAT sector, the geographic area and the pause in the years of accounting, but also a combination of the first three references.38

The Italian History Index, an extremely valuable instrument for the virtual sources of Italian history – edited by the European University Institute in Florence – presents, among the various thematic portals available, the one dedicated to the Economic, Financial and Business History. It contains a large number of websites of archives and business history with short descriptions of the content of every IT source.39 In the UNESCO portal of Archives, it is also possible to find an area dedicated to Italian business and labor archives with links to some of the most important websites on this subject.40 Other sources with suggestions and links to a


37 *Ibidem.* In the website it is highlighted that: “the limit for the capital is as follows: 1908-1940: (apart from 1914): 1.000.000 Lire 1914: 500.000 Lire 1949-1952: 10.000.000 lire 1956: 25.000.000 Lire 1958-1961: 50.000.000 Lire 1964-1973: 100.000.000 Lire 1980: 1.000.000.000 Lire 1984: 2.000.000.000 Lire Up to the volume of 1937 there are some companies that, even if they hadn’t reached the limit, joined the Asipa and the Italian companies with the offices abroad that are excluded from the digital archives. For the volumes of 1912 and 1914 the limit is calculated on the capital paid, while for all the other volumes, it is determined in relation to the authorized capital. (*Imita.db* – *Banca Dati delle Aziende Italiane, Soglie prestabilite*, <http://imitadb.unisi.it/soglia.asp/>).


variety of significant sources are: the links of the Centro per la cultura d’impresa and of Museimpresa, the webpage on “Economic, social and technology history” of the Library of the Dipartimento di Scienze della Storia e della Documentazione Storica dell’Università degli Studi di Milano; “Industrie.it”, the portal and search engine of online industries, enterprises and companies and “Azienda Italia”, the IT database of the Compendio Nazionale dell’Economia, set up by the “C.R.E.A. - Centro di Ricerche Economico Aziendali” dell’Università “Bocconi” in Milan.

3. The Italian periodicals. The centers, the associations, the institutions, the museums and the foundations

An essential source of information, one that is increasingly present on the Net, may be found in several online periodicals of business history, such as “Imprese e Storia” – which replaced “Archivi e Imprese” in 1999 – and the most recent “Culture e impresa”\(^{42}\) representing the two most significant examples in these field. On the website of “Imprese e Storia” managed by the Dipartimento di Economia Politica dell’Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca, the magazine is presented as: “a six-monthly review dedicated to the history of business and entrepreneurs, organizational and managerial models, the world of work and technology, financial institutions and forms of regulation of the market; dedicated also to the history of Italy’s economic, social and political history. It publishes original research and stimulates the comparison among various methodological and disciplinary approaches. A distinctive feature of this periodical is its strong support of the evolution of the subject at an international level. Faithful to its origins, the magazine is a privileged field of information and discussion on the

\(^{41}\) See Centro per la cultura d’impresa, Link, <http://www.culturadimpresa.org/link/linkcent.htm>; Museimpresa, Info, Link, <http://www.museimpresa.com/eng.aspx?area=3&menu=52&submenu=0>; Biblioteca del Dipartimento di Scienze della Storia e della Documentazione Storica dell’Università degli Studi di Milano, Risorse per la storia in rete, Storia economica, sociale e della tecnologia, <http://users.unimi.it/storia/biblioteca/cataloghi/risorse/storianrete/eto_economica.htm>; Industrie.it: portale e motore di ricerca, <http://www.industrie.it/>; Azienda Italia, <http://www.aziendaitaliaonline.it/aziendaitalia/index.jsp>. These last two search engines provide a great deal of essential information. The first lets the user link to the websites of a large number of Italian companies divided into many sectors. The second one “offers a comprehensive general outline of the productive Italy and is directed not only to the cognitive aspect (…). The database shows the profiles of all the joint stock companies, the agencies, the holding companies, the limited partnerships and the other significant companies that can be selected with many different research keys.”

issues regarding business archives and archivists in order to promote the preservation and the valorization of the historical and cultural heritage they manage. «Imprese e storia» addresses historians, economists, management researchers, social scientists and business and public archivists.  

In its turn, the online bilingual magazine “Culture e impresa”, promoted by the Ansaldo Foundation in Genoa and the “Centro per la cultura d’impresa” in Milan aims at “the stewardship of the cultural heritage of profit-making organizations and the promotion of business culture”, with the intention of “making historical business documentation available to researchers and to the general public. By making operational procedures more visible, business reduces the sense of distance that is often perceived by its surrounding community”. Moreover, the magazine wants to become the “to be a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas among entrepreneurs, business leaders and researchers grounded in both the cultural significance of these objectives and a scientific approach to company operations” and represents “the occasion to raise the issue of memory as a cultural and ethical basis for business”.

Whereas the website of “Imprese e Storia”, through its archives, enables the reader to consult all the issues of the magazine, but offers only the updated indexes and the English abstracts of a part of the more recent articles, “Culture e Impresa” puts all the issues of the magazine at the readers’ disposal, as well as articles with reviews, news, files and interesting hyper-textual links.

A further publication worthy of attention is the totally online journal “Tafter”, which publishes articles on the economy of culture. Other relevant publications that can be traced

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43 Imprese e Storia, [http://dipeco.economia.unimib.it/impreseestoria/IT/intro.html].


46 See Imprese e Storia, Archivio, [http://dipeco.economia.unimib.it/impreseestoria/IT/archivio.html].

47 See Culture e impresa, Archivio, [http://www.cultureimpresa.it/04-2006/italian/archivio.html].

48 See Tafter. Cultura è sviluppo, [http://www.tafter.it/]. This magazine with articles on the world of business and a focus on business culture aims at representing a “Meeting point and a stimulus for the research on the binomial culture-business, on territorial marketing, on the local development, on the economy related to cultural assets in a broadest sense” (Tafter. Cultura è sviluppo, Chi siamo, [http://www.tafter.it/pagina.asp?id=1]; cfr.

However, a fundamental online source for the archives and the business history in Italy is a series of portals and websites with references to centers, associations, institutes, museums and foundations whose heritage isn’t just the simple uploading of the paper sources onto the Net, but rather the nucleus of a first complex organization of the field contents on virtual bases. The website of the “Centro per la cultura d’impresa”⁵⁵, an association set up in 1991 on the

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⁴⁹ See Annali di Storia dell’Impresa, <http://www.associazioneanai.it/User/pubblica_pre_annali.php?testata_id=8&last&flash=pubb_annali1>. In the website corresponding to the publication – edited by “Fondazione ASSI”, the Italian research body on business history – it is underlined that “The Annual Books on Business History are published once a year. They collect various contributions organized in homogeneous sections or according to a miscellaneous style. These are: debates on specific business or industry history themes, translations of particularly interesting foreign contributions, bibliographies, studies and researches”.


⁵² See A.M.M.A., Servizi, Culturale - Storico, Rivista “Le culture della tecnica”, <http://www.amma.it/servizi/culturalestorico/campiattivita/rivistacleculturedellatecnica/index.htm>. As far as this magazine is concerned until the 8th issue only the indexes are published while, from the following issue its content is entirely online.


⁵⁵ See Centro per la cultura d’impresa, <http://www.culturadimpresa.org/>. The association aims at the promotion of the “safeguard and valorization of the records of its associates, business culture through the acquisition, the direct safeguard and the valorization of the historical and contemporary documentary heritage
initiative of the Camera di Commercio, Industria, Artigianato e Agricoltura in Milan, is a valuable example of a comprehensive resource. The Centro, in order to facilitate the safeguarding and valorization of the historical heritage of enterprise, operates "in the field of archives, industrial archaeology, business museums, scientific research and training" and carries out many activities listed on the site. Among these activities, the initiative for the "establishment of a territorial economic archives for the safeguard of the business archives at risk in the Milan area" is particularly interesting. This is based on the combining of some first historical business archives preserved in the Centro (A. L. Colombo, Caproni, La Postelegrafonica, Montedison, Unione Esercizi Elettrici, Ordine professionale degli Agenti di cambio, Carlo Erba).

At the same time, the association organizes training courses, offers a virtual itinerary through the centers of the Milanese economy, and is involved in a wide spectrum of other activities: research studies, publications, online exhibitions, oral sources, the library and the

produced by the companies and the other economic subjects, the creation of territorial economic archives and business museums in collaboration with the local institutions and with the system of representation of the interests, the training of cultural operators capable of deal with the documentary heritage of the companies guaranteeing their safeguard and valorization, and the publication of the results of its activity" (Centro per la cultura d'impresa, Chi siamo, <http://www.culturadimpresa.org/chi.htm>).

56 Centro per la cultura d'impresa, Chi siamo, Soci, <http://www.culturadimpresa.org/chi/goc-up.htm>. Together with the Camera di Commercio, founding member of the Centro, there are other 25 members, almost totally with business and economic origins.

57 As underlined in the website: "The concept of territorial economic archives (or concentration territorial archives) comes from the German experience where, since 1904, the Chambers of Commerce and the entrepreneurial associations have aimed at safeguarding the culture of the local entrepreneurial system and preserving the archives. This need was felt also in other countries where it is cultivated according to modalities changing with the structure of the entrepreneurial system and of the organization of the management of the cultural assets. In the Anglo-Saxon world the Universities have a concentration and preservation function. In France and in Denmark these funds are entrusted to a specialized branch of the state rules. The reason of it is not to lose the many different business cultures (organizational, technological, scientific, managerial and economic) when the commercial institutions interrupt their continuity. The attention to the enterprise as protagonist of the cultural production is a recent acquisition and comes from the recognition of its economic institutional nature that can influence the distributional, training and decision-making dynamics of the country. Business history is essential to the creation of the identities of the territories and the populations (...). From here, the need to create on the territory economic territorial archives, institutions inserted in the relational system of the entrepreneurial community but, at the same time, linked to independent cultural motivations thanks to which they can intervene to prevent the economic difficulties from creating a second difficulty of cultural origins" Centro per la cultura d'impresa, Attività, Archivio economico territoriale, <http://www.culturadimpresa.org/attivita/arch_terr.htm>, <http://www.culturadimpresa.org/attivita/arch_terr_01.htm>.

newsletter. However, the two most interesting aspects of the Centro’s activities are certainly the creation of the database on the industrial archaeology of the Lombardy region, and the area of the website dedicated to business archives and museums. In the first case, an interactive map allows the user to gain access to 824 files on industrial archaeology websites with information on their location and classification, their manufactured products and some historical notes. In the second case, a single entry unites the information on business archives and museums with references to further sources: to the reconnaissance census of the business archives of Milan province, the photographic archives and the audiovisual archives of the Centro, but especially to the search mask for the lists of business archives and economic agencies active in Italy, which in turn to a direct link with about 80 business historical institutions.

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63 See Centro per la cultura d’impresa, Attività, Archivi e musei d’impresa, Elenco degli archivi d’impresa e degli enti economici attivi in Italia, <http://www.culturadimpresa.org/archivi_impresa/archivi_impresa.htm>. As it is explained in the same page of the website: “This list aims at highlighting the companies and the economic institutions that were able to understand the cultural and social value of its documentation putting it at the public’s disposal. The data here listed do not give indications on the documentation but help to get in contact with the archives”. Every schedule of the list in fact contains information concerning the name of the company or of the institution, the names of the responsible of the service and the archives, the address, the telephonic contacts, the e-mail and the website, the availability of the archives, possible notes and events, the date of updating of the information.
Another valuable portal is sponsored by “Museimpresa”\textsuperscript{64}, the association promoted in 2001 by Assolombarda and Confindustria that “aims at the promotion of business cultural policy through the valorization of the business museum and archives” and that “carries on activities of research, training, development and analysis of in the field of business museology and archives-keeping”\textsuperscript{65}. Among the most significant initiatives of the association is the “Settimana della Cultura d’Impresa” (Business Culture Week) – with its fifth edition with the collaboration of Confindustria -, covering a complex timetable of events (conferences, seminars, educational laboratories, guided tours, exhibitions and film exhibitions)\textsuperscript{66}. A particularly interesting feature that deserves attention is the “Fondo di storia dell’impresa in Italia dall’Unità a oggi” (Fond of Business History in Italy from the Unification to the Present), a unique collection in our country including more than six thousand volumes and publications dedicated to this subject in Italy\textsuperscript{67}. However, the most relevant sector of the Museimpresa website is dedicated to museums and archives, with a map, which will be constantly updated, of the Italian structures, and the collection of records linked to at least one company\textsuperscript{68}. In this area, three different types of research are possible among more than one

\textsuperscript{64} See Museimpresa, <http://www.museimpresa.com/default.aspx>

\textsuperscript{65} Museimpresa, Associazione, Mission, <http://www.museimpresa.com/cms.aspx?template=testo&area=1&menu=1&pageid=143&overmenu=0>. As it is underlined in the website: “The company is one of the central agent of progress and modernization in the contemporary society: it creates innovation and passes on a set of material signs and values that can be wholly considered as cultural assets; it is a direct expression of ethical and esthetical values, a paradigm of social and cultural development, of knowledge and training”. The “Associazione Italiana Musei e Archivi d’Impresa” (Museimpresa), currently formed by 35 members, “wants to develop the awareness of the national and international entrepreneurial system on these themes and to boost an open and free cooperation in the carrying on of research activities, divulgation, updating and debate on business culture” (see Museimpresa, <http://www.museimpresa.com/cms.aspx?area=1>).


\textsuperscript{68} The fond of business history preserved in the Library in via Senato in Milan (see Biblioteca di via Senato, Biblioteca, <http://www.bibliotecadiviasenato.it/m_Biblioteca/Default.htm>), is, as indicated in the website of “Museimpresa”: “a real and true novelty in the scene of the Italian libraries, it documents the vicissitudes of the Italian entrepreneurial activity and production through the texts and the images of the business celebrative books, of catalogues, brochures, presents, a material frequently outside the usual editorial distribution channels. A significant part of the collection is dedicated to the Repertori (lists of companies with informative schedules, divided in product sectors) and to the Advertising history for the privileged relations that it has with business communication”.

hundred business museums and archives: methodological by field of activity, geographically by province, and brand by division of company brands.\footnote{Cfr. Musei e Archivi, Ricerca merceologica, <http://www.museimpresa.com/merceologica.aspx>; Musei e Archivi, Ricerca geografica, <http://www.museimpresa.com/geografica.aspx>; Musei e Archivi, Ricerca per marchio, <http://www.museimpresa.com/marchio.aspx>. The results of this research are scheduled related to every entity, with information concerning the typology, the brand, the addresses, the websites of the companies.}

In the association sector, there are several websites to be considered: the renowned “Istituto per la Cultura e la Storia d’Impresa «Franco Momigliano» (ICSIM)”, the “Fondazione ASSI”, the “Associazione Duccio Bigazzi”, the “Associazione degli Industriali Metallurgici Meccanici ed Affini (AMMA)”, the “Fondazione ISEC”, the “Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti»”, and a recent arrival; the “Museoweb dell’economia varesina”.

The ICSIM in Terni is an important training center, “undertaking activities for the study, training and promotion of events on the problems of economy, business history and related subjects”.\footnote{Istituto per la Cultura e la Storia d’Impresa “Franco Momigliano”, <http://www.icsim.it/>, <http://www.icsim.it/istituto/institute.htm>.} Among its objectives is a project for the creation of a “Museo a cielo aperto” (Open air museum) of industrial archaeology and heritage,\footnote{See Istituto per la Cultura e la Storia d’Impresa “Franco Momigliano”, Archeologia Industriale, i Beni Culturali per ICSIM, <http://www.icsim.it/beni_culturali/xdef.htm>. This project aims at “creating an open air museum which can be at the same time an operational instrument of a conscious path of industrial monuments preservation, but also a moment of permanent activity of reflection on business history and its testimonies, a real and true cultural institute with a national and international value” (Istituto per la Cultura e la Storia d’Impresa “Franco Momigliano”, Archeologia Industriale, i Beni Culturali per ICSIM, L’unicità ternana: le ragioni del progetto, <http://www.icsim.it/beni_culturali/a1.htm>). Moreover: “ICSIM contribution in this field can be divided in three key sectors (...): the training of professional figures that can operate concretely in the field; the setting up of continuous training programs especially through the updating of operators already working in the school and in the public and private sector of the cultural and environmental assets; the collection and the ordering of the records and their putting at the disposal of specialists, administrators, scholars and citizensthrough repertories and inventories to be used through the modern IT techniques; the cultural promotion on the themes related to industrial archaeological assets and to the industrial heritage through conferences, seminars, moments of reflection that represent a link to the most advanced Italian and European experiences” (Istituto per la Cultura e la Storia d’Impresa “Franco Momigliano”, Archeologia Industriale, i Beni Culturali per ICSIM, Il ruolo dell’ICSIM, <http://www.icsim.it/beni_culturali/a2.htm>).} while its general activity revolves around integrated preparation and updating, diversified initiatives (conferences, conventions, seminars, territorial and thematic paths, prizes and presentations of books), but
also with the publication of a newsletter and the management of the “Centro di Documentazione sul Patrimonio Industriale” created in 2000

The “Fondazione ASSI”, “a research institution set up in order to coordinate the activities of a group of scholars from various disciplines and training, who share an interest for history and for the diachronic analysis of business” gives through its website – a series of extremely useful information on its editorial activities, on conferences, seminars and working papers. The activity of the “Associazione Duccio Bigazzi” for the research on business history and the world of work is described on the Net with particular reference to the available documentation (Duccio Bigazzi’s bibliography and a thesis fond) and to the initiatives (meetings, publications and scholarships).

The website of the “Associazione degli Industriali Metallurgici Meccanici ed Affini (AMMA)”, founded in 1919 by Giovanni Agnelli, is a wealth of information and includes several stimulating areas such as the one dedicated to the early historical fond, a collection of

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72 See Istituto per la Cultura e la Storia d’Impresa “Franco Moniglio”, Centro Documentazione sul Patrimonio Industriale, <http://www.icsim.it/beniculturali/beniculturali.htm>. As specified in the first of the two WebPages: “The aim of the Centro is to promote the safeguarding, the valorization and the use of the industrial archaeological heritage in Terni with the perspective of creating a large open air museum as other European cities have already done. (...) The Centro Documentazione sul Patrimonio Industriale is an instrument that allows (...) the orientation and the documentation on one of the most important industrial archaeological site in Italy and in Europe. Terni and Narni reality is an exceptional industrial archaeological park of fundamental relevance for the understanding of the industrialization process in Italy, not only regarding the productive cycles and processes or the plant engineering techniques, but also the style and the architecture used in the planning of the industrial and settling buildings”.


75 See Associazione Duccio Bigazzi, <http://www.associazionebigazzi.it>. As highlighted in the website: “The Association seeks to promote research and study activity, to favor occasions of theoretical and methodological debates, to contribute to the safeguarding, the knowledge and the valorization of documentary sources. The activities and the initiatives will be principally addressed to young scholars, with the aim of developing the research that Duccio Bigazzi inspired and encouraged with innovative studies and passionate and rigorous teaching activity”.


materials – manuscripts, printed volumes, maps and incisions – of technique history dating
from 1466 to 1850. Another one is the catalogue of the Piedmont entrepreneurs, a proper
electronic archives formed by the essential sources (especially bibliographical) referring to
more than seven thousand people and corporate names that carried out economic private
activity between 1740 and 1911. This repertory has a search engine that can be consulted by
alphabetic letters or names. Moreover, together with the magazine “Le culture della
tecnica”, there are many publications of the association available on line as “I Quaderni de
«Le Culture»”, the series “Documenti”, the series “Archivi di scienza e tecnica” and a
series of prestigious exhibitions.

78 See A.M.M.A., Servizi, Culturale - Storico, Fondo Antico,
<http://www.amma.it/servizi/culturalestorico/fondoantico/index.htm>; A.M.M.A. - Archivio Storico,

79 See A.M.M.A., Servizi, Culturale - Storico, Catalogo Imprenditori,
<http://www.amma.it/italiano/catalogo_imprenditori/intro-imprenditori.htm>. As far as the entrepreneurs
database is concerned, in the website is affirmed that: The research (...) wanted to create a list as completed as
possible of the names of the people who carried out a manufactory or commercial activity in Piemonte, with
entrepreneurial characteristics; of the places in which they carried out these activities, limiting the research to the
boarders of Piemonte (apart from some limited extension to the Savoia and the Valle D’Aosta or to some other
Italian regions, if the companies in the sample had their headquarters in the Piemonte area); of the product
typologies created or handled. The research ended in 1911 – year in which the register of the companies was
created – and developed through the systematic examination of all the available sources (A.M.M.A., Servizi,
Culturale - Storico, Catalogo Imprenditori, Nota Metodologica,

80 The repertory of the entrepreneurs in Piemonte was created through schedules containing a series of detailed
information with the name of the entrepreneurs or the corporate name, the place in which the company works,
the year of reference of the source examined, the product typology, the specific products and the bibliographic
indications. In some cases, it is possible to find also other elements as the number of people in charge, the
quantity and the quality of the machinery, the quantity and quality of the power installed, the patents achieved,
the reference to other names, the iconography, the prizes of exhibitions, the selling prices and so on (see
A.M.M.A., Servizi, Culturale - Storico, Catalogo Imprenditori, Nota Metodologica,

81 See A.M.M.A., Servizi, Culturale - Storico, Catalogo Imprenditori,
<http://www.amma.it/imp-
parse.nhtml?action=catalogo&url=italiano/catalogo_imprenditori/catalogo-imprenditori.htm>,

82 See A.M.M.A., Servizi, Culturale - Storico, I Quaderni de "Le Culture",
<http://www.amma.it/servizi/culturalestorico/campiondiattivita/quadernideleculture/index.htm>; A.M.M.A.,
Servizi, Culturale - Storico, Collana "Documenti",
<http://www.amma.it/servizi/culturalestorico/campiondiattivita/collanadocumenti/index.htm>; A.M.M.A., Servizi,
Culturale - Storico, Collana "Archivi di scienza e tecnica",
<http://www.amma.it/servizi/culturalestorico/campiondiattivita/collanaarchiviaischienzaetecnica/index.htm

The “Fondazione ISEC”\(^{84}\) (even if they have only recently paid attention “to the economic history of the Milan area and in particular, to the evolution of the large industries active since the end of the 17th century”\(^{85}\)) has among its three research fields the theme of work and business\(^{86}\). In its meticulously structured website, one may find news about the publications and the ongoing works of monographic research\(^{87}\), on the reordering of some archives (Archivio Storico Breda – Finanziaria Ernesto Breda, Archivio del Bottonificio Binda, Archivio della Famiglia Lucini Passalacqua, Sezione Fotografica dell’Archivio Storico Ercole Marelli, Archivio Storico Itaiet)\(^{88}\), the library and the newspaper and periodical library\(^{89}\), the heritage of the foundation and the online works. The area dedicated to the patrimony that contributed greatly to the archives' growth with conspicuous finds of industrial history\(^{90}\) has two thematic sections (out of three), “Fondi antichi” and “Imprese e fabbriche”, collecting respectively the inventories of the activities of some families in Lombardia and funds of

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\(^{84}\) Cfr. Fondazione ISEC, <http://www.fondazioneisec.it/index.php>. As indicated in this page of the website: “The Fondazione ISEC, Istituto per la Storia dell’Eti Contemporanea (Institute for the contemporary history) is a center of study and historical research. It collects, preserves, orders and put at students and researchers’ disposal the archival and bibliographic material on the most important themes of the 20th century history: labor and business history, social and political history. It provides professional advice of specialized personnel for individual research, teaching activities on sources and historiography and for the creation and ordering of historical archives. It organizes conferences, seminars in collaboration with similar Italian and European institutions and it promotes refresher courses for teachers and students of junior secondary schools and secondary schools. According to agreements with Milan universities, finally, it organizes internships for selected students”.


\(^{90}\) See Fondazione ISEC, Il patrimonio, <http://www.fondazioneisec.it/patrimonio/index.php>; Fondazione ISEC, Il patrimonio, L’Archivio, <http://www.fondazioneisec.it/patrimonio/archivio.php>. In fact, in this part of the website, it is possible to observe that: “From the 1990s: the Fondazione worked (...) to find the documentation of large companies in Sesto San Giovanni and Milan, some of which had an important role in the development of the Italian industry. These funds for the history of the business and economy are characterized by a broad typological variety. Paper records, mechanical drawings of products and plants offer a detailed perspective of the technological transformations and the project culture. The plans reveal the construction of the industrial setting; the photographs recount almost a century of labor history, based on worker’s labor to the era automation; the advertising sketches frequently signed by renowned representatives of the graphics field (it is worth to mention Araca, Boccasile, Huber), are expressions of a communication culture that even now reinforces the international image of Sesto San Giovanni and the area surrounding Milan”.
different natures, including administrative, commercial and technical inventories and records produced by the companies in Milan. The field of online works is essentially comprised of the project of digitalization of the photographic section of the Archivio Storico Ercole Marelli (and its relative exhibition), and by the virtual photographic exhibition “La Breda produce. 1886-1994”, two remarkable examples of the opportunities offered by IT sources.

The project “Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti»” in Brescia, promoted by the “Fondazione Civiltà Bresciana” and by “Fondazione Luigi Micheletti”, is the core of an integrated museum system with an exceptional variety of resources. In the Musil website,


93 See Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti», [http://www.musil.bo.it/flash.html].

94 See Fondazione Civiltà Bresciana, [http://www.civiltabresciana.it]; Fondazione Biblioteca Archivio Luigi Micheletti, [http://www.brescialibrozza.it/micheletti/index.htm]. Also the websites of the two foundations are extremely interesting because of the quality of the information they contain. The “Fondazione Civiltà Bresciana” has two relevant initiatives: the “Museo del Ferro”, the first exhibition area of the “Musil”, where it is possible to “appreciate the cultural richness and the knowledge of the craft and post-industrial past” (Fondazione Civiltà Bresciana, Il Museo del Ferro - La Fucina di San Bartolomeo, [http://www.civiltabresciana.it/museo/home.htm]) and the “Centro di Documentazione per la Storia e l’Arte del Ferro”, aiming at “a gradual recovery and IT registration of the historical documentation pertinent to iron works in the area surrounding Brescia found in public and private archives” (Fondazione Civiltà Bresciana, Centro di Documentazione per la Storia e l’Arte del Ferro, Il Centro, [http://www.civiltabresciana.it/cdf/centro.htm]; cfr. Fondazione Civiltà Bresciana, Centro di Documentazione per la Storia e l’Arte del Ferro, [http://www.civiltabresciana.it/cdf/home.htm]). The “Fondazione Luigi Micheletti” allows an articulated virtual tour to the exhibition “Scienza e tecnica nell’industrializzazione italiana”, highlighting the contribution given by Italian researches and inventors to the technical and scientific development during the age of industrialization” (Fondazione Biblioteca Archivio Luigi Micheletti, Scienza e tecnica nell’industrializzazione italiana, Presentazione, [http://www.brescialibrozza.it/micheletti/01_inizio.htm]; cfr. Fondazione Biblioteca Archivio Luigi Micheletti, Scienza e tecnica nell’industrializzazione italiana, [http://www.brescialibrozza.it/micheletti/visita.htm]). Moreover, the website of this foundation presents the online magazine of history, environment, technique and society “altroNovecento” (see altroNovecento, ambiente – tecnica – società, [http://www.altronovecento_quipo.it/]). Another significant case, linked to the previous one, is the one of the “Fondazione Negri”, which started the digital filing of the 75,000 images in the identically named photographer’s study (more than 38,000 schedules of which were already available online) and took over the archives of the Carrozzeria Borsani in Milan, of the Carrozzeria Orlandi in Brescia and the one, also iconographic, of the Turin journalist and cars historian Carlo Felice Zampini Salazar (cfr. Fondazione Negri, [http://www.negri.it/index.htm]).

95 As indicated on the “Musil” website: “The Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti» is one of the most recent examples of extensive and well-integrated museum systems on the territory, focusing on the history of industrial development. With its various exhibition areas and paths, the Musil in Brescia prefigure a regional system according to the example of some of the most advanced European experiences. In the Italian context, it is
there is a hint of the finds that can be seen in the main galleries of the central headquarters of the museum divided into four sections: the 18th century gallery, centered on the contemporary economic development; the cinema gallery, centered on instruments, productions, creativity and cinematographic techniques; the machinery gallery, centered on industrial archaeology, technology history, labor history and business history; the Brescia gallery, centered on the industrial transformation of a specific territory. The activities of the museum revolve around the studies and the projects, completed or ongoing and around the publications. Moreover, the abundant heritage of the museum was collected in two different areas: the collections (inventories and files) and the documentation (an archives with about 70 fonds, a library, a film library, a newspaper and periodical library, a photographic library, a collection of icons and a media library), with the availability of composite, qualified and wide online hypertext resources.

The "Museowell dell’economia varesina", only recently published on the Web, originated "as a development of the census of the archives of the old business in the province of Varese promoted by the Chamber of Commerce in Varese with the contribution of the Lombardy

the first case of dynamic museum that from the very first moment has a central office in a city and a network of branches on the territory" (Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti», Sedi, <http://www.musil.bs.it/sedi.html>).


See Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti», Mappa, <http://www.musil.bs.it/sezioni.html>. In particular, in the sections of the website, it is necessary to refer to those regarding the heritage and its documentation.

region and carried out by the Centro per la Cultura d’Impresa\textsuperscript{102}. The website, apart from giving a first list of business culture museums and institutions locally and a bibliography on business history of that territory\textsuperscript{103}, has a research form and a “Museo virtuale delle imprese longeve” with a gallery of every company\textsuperscript{104}. The virtual museum is an instrument of detailed knowledge, particularly advanced and continuously updated. There are five informative areas for each company: “the company” with the personal data of the company and a hypertextual historical profile; the “genealogy” both of the company and of the family; “the signs of the company” with all the materials regarding business communication; the “Sources” with the descriptive files of the archives and the oral sources and a bibliography; the “News” with an e-mail to which send news, records, images and testimonies on business history\textsuperscript{105}.

\textsuperscript{102} Museoweb dell’economia varecina. Presentazione, \texttt{<http://www.museoweb.it/presentazione.html>}. In this page, it is affirmed that “sixty companies set up before 1950 and owning a historical archives (paper records, photographs, technical drawings, brochures and catalogues etc.) that testify to the longevity and the permanence on the territory of the enterprise. They are mostly family-owned small and medium enterprises.” agreed the initiative and that: “the following step was to let all the community know about the historical heritage of these companies through a multimedia presentation that emphasizes the collection’s typological variety: archival records, objects, images, buildings, oral testimonies, and anything that helps to interpret the entrepreneurial path.” By ‘old business’ they mean “a profit-making enterprise operating on the market for many years”; moreover, they underline that: “there is no one-way criterion to say when a business can be defined as old. Thirty years begin to be considered as significant; fifty are an important goal given that they usually involve the passing of a generation. Only a few glorious companies are more than one hundred years old and they tend to reiterate in associations. The importance of the old companies in the territory comes from their ability to keep working in the market despite the vicissitudes that continuously cause the death or the changing ownership of a business. This birth/death of the companies determines a constant renewal of the entrepreneurial population but also a continuous dispersion of entrepreneurial experiences. Old companies can hoard these skills; or they can accumulate and pass them on to the following generations in the form of information, operative style and values. In the course of their history, the companies created behaviors founded on trust and on the quality of the relationships with clients, suppliers and the local community. Old companies see in the market the field of an economic competition regulated and characterized also by ethical components. Such behavior is inspired by the family tradition which is: frequently behind them: on one hand, this allows them to put together the managerial activity with the trust, affection and solidarity of the family; on the other, it pushes the entrepreneurs to safeguard while working the social relationships that the family built on the territory in the past and guarantees a credibility to its members. Concepts recently entered in business culture such as social reputation and corporate responsibility have always belonged to the genetic code of the old companies.” Museoweb dell’economia varecina, Il sistema delle imprese, \texttt{<http://www.museoweb.it/sistema.html>}).

\textsuperscript{103} See Museoweb dell’economia varecina, Cultura e territorio, Musei e istituzioni della cultura d’impresa, \texttt{<http://www.museoweb.it/cultura1.html>; Museoweb dell’economia varecina, Cultura e territorio, Bibliografia, \texttt{<http://www.museoweb.it/cultura2.html>}}.

\textsuperscript{104} See Museoweb dell’economia varecina, Il sistema delle imprese, Imprese longeve della provincia di Varese, \texttt{<http://www.museoweb.it/sistema1.html>; Museoweb dell’economia varecina, Museo virtuale delle imprese longeve, Visita le gallery, \texttt{<http://www.museoweb.it/mappa.html>}}.

\textsuperscript{105} In the website presentation, it is highlighted that: “the vicissitudes of the companies develop in a historical gallery formed by the profiles of the single companies and to which it is possible to access through a map of the territory. The research uses many paths: the records preserved in the file of the Business register of the Chamber of Commerce of Varese and other Chambers, the materials held in the business archives, the bibliography, the personal accounts of the protagonists through videotaped interviews. The direct testimony has a central role in the creation of historical profiles. The stories of the entrepreneurs, their families and their collaborators underline
There are numerous other examples that indicate Italy’s online presence in the sector of centers, associations, institutions, museums and foundations that deal with business history. However, given their great extent and despite the interesting features of each one, I prefer to limit their mention to a simple list with all the historiographical links, and encourage readers, to browse for themselves and discover the valuable contents of these fine resources.

The following list of websites gives an updated picture of other Italian IT sources and includes the following references: the project, supervised by CSI-Piedmont and the Compagnia di San Paolo, named “Storia e cultura dell’industria. Il Nord Ovest dal 1850” with a full collection of online lessons, with a multimedia system in continuous evolution, dedicated to the themes of industrial culture and industrial sectors history and of the history of three regions (Liguria, Piedmont e Valle d’Aosta)\(^{106}\); the pages of the “Gruppo Italiano Archivi di Impresa (GIAI)” in the website of the Associazione Nazionale Archivistica Italiana (ANAI)\(^{107}\); the portal of “Associazione Italiana per il Patrimonio Archeologico Industriale (AIPAI)” and many websites on industrial archaeology\(^{108}\); the website of the association

\(^{106}\) See *Storia e cultura dell’industria. Il Nord Ovest dal 1850*, [http://www.storiaindustria.it/index.htm?1].


promoted by Confindustria and the University “Carlo Cattaneo – LIUC” in Castellanza named “Archivio del cinema industriale e della comunicazione d’impresa” with a research form for every catalogue available (industrial cinema, business museums, Caroselli)\(^{109}\); the website of the “Museo del Patrimonio Industriale” in Bologna\(^{110}\); the website of the “Centro Studi sull’Impresa e sul Patrimonio Industriale” in Vicenza\(^{111}\); the pages dedicated to business archives of the “Biblioteca Civica e Archivi Storici Rovereto”\(^{112}\); the page of “La rivista di engramma” on “I musei aziendali veneti nel web”\(^{113}\); the website of the cultural association “Il Paesaggio dell’Eccellenza” in Recanati\(^{114}\); the website of the “Fondazione Famiglia Legler”, with a historical database on the enterprises in Bergamo (Imberg.db) from the Unity of Italy to 1952\(^{115}\); the website of the “Fondazione IRI”\(^{116}\); the “Forum di Omegna”\(^{117}\).

\(^{109}\) See Archivio del cinema industriale e della comunicazione d’impresa, [http://archinudi.liuc.it/home.html](http://archinudi.liuc.it/home.html); Archivio del cinema industriale e della comunicazione d’impresa, i cataloghi, [http://archinudi.liuc.it/cataloghi.htm](http://archinudi.liuc.it/cataloghi.htm).

\(^{110}\) See Museo del Patrimonio Industriale, [http://www.comune.bologna.it/patrimonioindustriale/](http://www.comune.bologna.it/patrimonioindustriale/).

\(^{111}\) See Centro Studi sull’Impresa e sul Patrimonio Industriale, [http://www.studimpresa.vi.it/](http://www.studimpresa.vi.it/).

\(^{112}\) See Biblioteca Tartarotti, Biblioteca Civica e Archivi Storici Rovereto, [http://www.bibliotecacivica.rovereto.tn.it/context04.jsp?ID_LINK=165&area=19](http://www.bibliotecacivica.rovereto.tn.it/context04.jsp?ID_LINK=165&area=19).

\(^{113}\) See La Rivista di engramma, I musei aziendali veneti nel web, [http://www.gramma.it/gramma_v4/homepage/33/link/vallini.html](http://www.gramma.it/gramma_v4/homepage/33/link/vallini.html).


\(^{116}\) See Fondazione IRI, [http://www.fondazioniringi.it/](http://www.fondazioniringi.it/). I will write later on this website when referring to the Archivio Storico Elettronico dell’IRI. For now, I would simply quote a brief passage from the presentation: “The renewal project for the Foundation’s website began with the aim of putting the enormous quantity of data of the foundation at the users’ disposal, especially scholars, researchers and graduates. These records were acquired by
managed by “Fondazione Museo Arti e Industria di Omegna”, which aims at being a center for the research and the preservation of the historical memory of this enterprise\textsuperscript{118}; the websites of other foundations (“Fondazione Luigi Einaudi”, “Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori”, “Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli”, “Fondazione Giannino Bassetti”, “Fondazione Edison”, “Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei” and “Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli”)\textsuperscript{119}; the portal of the “WorldWideMetaMuseum”, which is a meta-museum in continuous evolution\textsuperscript{120}; the website of the “Centro Italiano di Documentazione sulla Cooperazione e l’Economia Sociale”, which, together with many sources on the origins and the evolution of the cooperative movement, gives the opportunity to find online historical cooperative archives and their documentary content\textsuperscript{121}; the websites of the “Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerca per la Storia Finanziaria Italiana (CIRSFI)” and of the “Anagrafe delle corporazioni in Italia durante l’età moderna”\textsuperscript{122}; the area of the portal of Unioncamere

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\textsuperscript{117} See Forum di Omegna, \url{http://www.forumomegna.org/}.

\textsuperscript{118} See Forum di Omegna, Fondazione Museo Arti e Industria di Omegna, Storia, \url{http://www.forumomegna.org/pagine/entita/storia/intro.html}.

\textsuperscript{119} See Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, \url{http://www.fondazioneeinaudi.it/}; Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, \url{http://www.fondazionemondadori.it/cms/}; Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, \url{http://www.fondazionefeltrinelli.it/}; Fondazione Giannino Bassetti, \url{http://www.fondazionebassetti.org/it/}; Fondazione Edison, \url{http://www.fondazionedison.it/}; Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei, \url{http://www.feem.it/feem/default.htm}; Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, \url{http://www.fnzi.it/}.

\textsuperscript{120} See WWMM, WorldWideMetaMuseum, \url{http://www.wwmm.org/index.asp}.

\textsuperscript{121} See Centro Italiano di Documentazione sulla Cooperazione e l’Economia Sociale, \url{http://www.cooperazione.net/}; Centro Italiano di Documentazione sulla Cooperazione e l’Economia Sociale, Risorsa online, Network, \url{http://www.cooperazione.net/risorseeonline/network.html}; Centro Italiano di Documentazione sulla Cooperazione e l’Economia Sociale, Risorsa online, Network, Database nazionale degli archivi cooperativi, \url{http://www.cooperazione.net/networkfind.asp}.

\textsuperscript{122} See Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerca per la Storia Finanziaria Italiana (CIRSFI), \url{http://www.dsii.unimi.it/dip/storia/biblio/cirisf/index.html}; Anagrafe delle corporazioni in Italia durante l’età moderna, \url{http://www.dsii.unimi.it/dip/storia/corp40/home.html}.
on “Gli Archivi e le Biblioteche delle Camere di Commercio”\textsuperscript{123}, with a “Guida agli Archivi Storici delle Camere di Commercio Italiane”\textsuperscript{124}.

\textsuperscript{123} See \textit{Cammere Cultura, Gli Archivi e le Biblioteche delle Camere di Commercio}, <http://www.camerecultura.it/>. In this page of the website it is highlighted that: “For more than two centuries of their history, the Italian Chambers of Commerce amass an extremely rich documentary heritage. The archives and the libraries of the Chambers are extremely important sources for the knowledge of the territorial economic development and of the national and local economic history. (...) This website enables you to access in-depth information on the Chambers’ documentary heritage and to understand how to consult it as well as the principal ongoing initiatives for its valorization”.

Business history in Italy and the new digital frontiers: archives and IT sources
by Amedeo Lepore
Second part

4. Associations of historical companies: Les Hénokiens, I Centenari and the Unione Imprese Storiche Toscane

A separate evaluation should be made for three portals; “Les Hénokiens”, “I Centenari – Associazione Imprese Storiche Familiari Campane” and “Unione Imprese Storiche Toscane (UIST)”\(^1\), which share common features although one is international while the other two are Italian, with regional emphasis. “Les Hénokiens” is an association of companies, created more than one hundred years ago by Gérard Glotin, chairman of the French company “Marie Brizard”: this association gathers together bicentenary companies, chaired by heirs of the founder, whose family still owns the majority of the capital or some rights to vote\(^2\). The “Les Hénokiens” portal enables users to access essential information on the history and the activity of the group\(^3\), providing also a chronology and a European map of the historical companies.\(^4\) Moreover, it has an area dedicated to its Italian associates (“Amarelli”, “Fonderia Campane Daciano Colbachini & Figli”, “Confetti Mario Pelino”, “Torrini”, “Cartiera Mantovana”, “Barovier&Toso”, “Ditta Bortolo Nardini”, “Beretta”, “Gruppo Falck”, “Augustea”, “Marioboselli”, “Piacenza Cashmere”, “Crespi1797”, “Lanificio G. B. Conte”, “Garbellotto”)\(^5\), with specific pages where one finds detailed indications


\(^2\) See Les Hénokiens, Devenir Hénokiens, http://www.henokiens.com/index_dev_fr.php. In the “Les Hénokiens” group, Italian companies are the majority; in fact, out of 38 associated, 15 come from Italy, 10 from France, 4 from Germany, 1 from Holland, 1 from Ireland, 4 from Japan, 1 from Belgium and 2 from Switzerland. The general philosophy of the association is to promote the value of family company concept, as opposed to that of multinational companies. (see Les Hénokiens, Histoire des Hénokiens, http://www.henokiens.com/index_histo_fr.php).


on the addresses of every company (including links to the websites, almost all with elements of historical and archival interest) on key moments of its history and of the company in recent years. The portal dedicated to Tuscan companies, at first limited only to the area around Florence and then extended to the entire region, puts together a group of historical activities, with a structure similar to those of “Les Hénokiens”. Besides the description of the association itself, this portal provides special files of information on the history of each company and their connection to the relative websites. The most significant is that of “Fratelli Alinari”, which puts online the iconographic


7 The “Associazione Imprese Storiche Fiorentine (AISF)”, has in fact recently widened its structure, now named “Unione Imprese Storiche Toscane (UIST)”.

8 See Unione Imprese Storiche Toscane, Firenze, L’Impresa Storica a Firenze, http://www.storiampresa.it/Firenze/pagina011.htm;

patrimony, giving – through its own digital archives – access to about 300,000 photographs, moreover, the website provides well-organized links, among which the “Museo di Storia della Fotografia Fratelli Alinari” and the “Museo dell’Immagine.” The portal of “I 15 Assosiazione Imprese Storiche Familiari Campane” groups 24 historical companies of the region using a model similar to that of “Les Hénoxiens”. The association, made up of companies each of which is over one hundred years old, puts at the public’s disposal all the digital schedules with the company’s name, address, telephone number, a short history of each activity and links to related websites.

10 See Fratelli Alinari, Archivi Fotografici, http://www.alinari.it/archivi-online.asp, Alinari Archives, http://www.alinariarchive.it/login/index.aspx?languageID=IT. For a more detailed outline of photography as a source for business history, see D. Bigazzi, Gli archivi fotografici e la storia dell’industria, in “Archivi e Imprese”, n. 8, 1993. In fact: “In 2001 the digital archives was inaugurated and continues to grow thanks to the constant increase in the number of images that can be consulted on line. At present, there are more than 200,000 images on the website Alinari Archives and more than 100,000 available in the Education section.” (Fratelli Alinari, Chi siamo, http://www.alinari.it/storia.asp). As highlighted on the website: “The Archives is the heart of Fratelli Alinari. Here we preserve the substantial heritage of portrait painting and records regarding art, history, folklore, environment, industry and society in Italy, Europe and the rest of the world from the second half of 1800s up to now. The content of the archives has also continued to grow with contemporary colored and black and white photographs. Along with the extraordinary materials of the archives Alinari, Anderson, Brogi, Chauffourier, Fiorentini and Manelli, more recently they have added film negatives and plates from collections such as the Wulz, Michetti, Nunez Vais, Bombelli, Molino, Bett-Borza, Zannier, Pozzor, Balocchi, Vannucci-Zauli, Unterveger, Tuminello, Munzani, Miniti, Trombetta, Panatta and Villani archives in Bologna. "Eating 600,000 images from 1914 to 1980. (...) The new photographic campaigns are enlarging the archives which currently preserves more than 2,350,000 historical film and plate negatives, of various dimensions, black and white or colored, 400,000 photocolors, 350,000 other modern prints to which we need to add 900,000 vintage prints for a total of 4,000,000 of images.” (Fratelli Alinari, Chi siamo, Museo & Archivi, Gli Archivi Fotografici Alinari, http://www.alinari.it/archivi-fotografici.asp).


5. The most important companies on the Net, their archives and similar experiences

An in-depth examination is needed of the sources of the Italian companies who have given greater importance to historical memory and to accomplish this, have adopted digitizing processes. These are some of the most significant experiences within Italian business archives whose offer of digital contents reaches levels of excellence. Beginning with the Ansaldo Foundation website15 “making available to the international scientific community a vast number of records including paper, photographic and film archives, produced in over 150 years of industrial history by companies in Liguria”.16 The website, in addition to the areas dedicated to the structure and the organization of the Foundation (administrative and advisory organs, rules, statute, and deontological code), to the activities and the information (notice board, news, chronology, dissertations, research and publications etc.)17, has a section of archives and collections (archives, collections, photographic archives, film archives, oral sources) that is the most extensive18 of the website. In fact, in this section, it is possible to retrieve “the archives acquired by various companies, organizations and individuals19 with an indication of the name of the fond, the archives and the series or collections, other than the description of the series or collections, their consistency, dates, inventories or lists”20. In particular, it refers to the records shared between: Ansaldo Fond and joint archives21, the fond of the Borsa Valori in Genoa22, the Costa Fond23, the Dufour Archives24, the Finmare Fond25, the Gerolamo Gaslini Fond26, the Ilva Fond and the joint archives27, the Francesco

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15 See Fondazione Ansaldo, http://www.fondazioneansaldo.it/.
16 Fondazione Ansaldo, http://www.fondazioneansaldo.it/. The first page underlines that this is a “wide and growing archival heritage that required the creation of the website, in addition to the traditional instruments for its use. The website is a concise and practical instrument that offers scholars and users a global vision of the archives managed and acquired, and informs the user on the activities and the aims of the institution.”
18 See Fondazione Ansaldo, Archivi e Raccolte, http://fondazioneansaldo.it/archivi%20e%20raccolte.htm. As indicated in the page of the website presenting this section: “Ansaldo Historical Archives (...) had a broader activity than that normally carried out by a historical business archives; its recognition as a territorial economic archives took place in February 2000 with the creation of the «Fondazione Ansaldo- Archivio Economico delle Imprese Liguri», which received the entire heritage preserved by Ansaldo Historical Archives”.
19 See Fondazione Ansaldo, Archivi e Raccolte, Struttura e ordinamento, http://www.fondazioneansaldo.it/archivio%20struttura%20e%20ordinamento.htm. In the same section of the website there is an explanation saying that: “As a starting point of the description, they used the archives. When the structure is particularly complex, with multiple archives linked by bonds to be respected and highlighted, they made use of a superior level: the fond. In the case of particularly complicated archives, they described the series or the collection”.
Manzitti Archives, the Perrone Archives, the Flavia Steno Archives, the Giovanni Zoncada Archives. In addition, there is information about the collections of technical and industrial drawings, artifacts and antiques, original shares and bonds, Campostano’s photographic lab, and several naval registers. Finally, this section of the website includes information about the photographic archives, the film archives and the oral sources, with a presentation of each resource and a mention of their funds and collections.

Another important case is that of IRI Historical Electronic Archives whose digitalization was achieved through the realization of two projects. This initiative made it possible to put online

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43 See Fondazione Ansaldo, Archivi e Raccolte, Fototeca, http://www.fondazioneansaldo.it/fototeca%20presentazione.htm,


http://www.fondazioneansaldo.it/fonti_orali_strutura_ordinamento.html. As mentioned in the website dedicated to the videodisc: “In 1986 the Ansaldo Historical Archives started a pilot experience in the field of the safeguarding and use of photographic material through the creation of a videodisc that contains about 30000 images belonging to the funds of Ansaldo, CGE and Perrone, created from the end of the 19th century up to the 1970s. This is a digital instrument that allows a high quality of the printed image and quick access to a wide range of visual information.” (see also L. Borzani, La fotografia tra documento e monumento: l’esperienza della fototeca Ansaldo, in “Archivi e Imprese”, n. 1, 1990). It’s also important to underline that the film archives “is at present one of the best in Italy because of the quantity of preserved original records” and that: “The research of the film archives highlighted industrial cinema produced by the companies: a cinema that, apart from its esthetic and visual value, is an important instrument of historical knowledge and analysis, from industrial archaeology to the models of institutional information, from the social behaviors to the dynamics of work culture. The Ansaldo film fond, consisting of films from 1910 until today, was the central core of this collection. Research was then addressed towards the acquisition of archives belonging to other big Italian companies such as Italia di Navigazione and Iva-Italsider. These three funds are an important historical source in order to reconstruct – through visual documentation – the relationship between Genoa and the shipbuilding industry, mechanics, war production, iron and steel industry, navigation. Other industrial funds were included in this archives: those of companies working in the food industry such as Sasso or Dufour, the Donato fond (acquired by Micheletti Foundation), or the Costa and Lloyd Triestino fonds regarding cargo, passengers and cruise ships”. For further information on the archives see A. Lombardo, L’Archivio Storico Ansaldo, in “Archivi e Imprese”, n. 11-12, 1995.


45 On this point, it is necessary to remember that: "IRI promoted a wide program aimed at the preservation and the valorization of its artistic heritage, declared in February 1993 of high historical interest by the archival superintendence office of Lazio. This program was divided in two different projects. The first one, begun in 1993 and concluded in
a large part of IRI's documentation formed by three large databases: the General Archives – Red Numbers, which includes the records of the companies controlled by IRI and its finance companies; the Archives II – Black Numbers, collecting the records produced by each IRI’s office; all the records of the Institute produced for external communication (annual balance sheets, 4-year programs, yearbooks, “grey literature” and everything else)\(^37\). On this point, I'd like to highlight that IRI Foundation’s website has a link to the website of IRI’s Historical Archives\(^37\), which – in addition to detailed information on projects realized by the working group of the “Centro per la ricerca e lo sviluppo di Metodologie e Applicazioni per gli Archivi Storici (MAAS)" of the Consorzio Roma Ricerche and on the archives itself\(^38\) – has an online research instrument\(^39\) for

1998, referred to the documentary fund that the Institute gave to the Central Italian Archives during the 1980s. The project regarded the filing and the digital duplication of the entire fund and the creation of the IT instruments and places for the research and the consultation of this material (descriptive files and digital images of the records) through the Net. In 1999 the second project was started. It aimed to make available the wide heritage IRI had in its historical headquarter in Via Veneto: almost 2 km of records which were entirely censused, ordered and described up to 1980. In this way they created a unique IT system integrating the various parts of the archives, the records produced directly from the institute as well as those collected and organized by the institute itself to manage all the companies in the group. They worked on more than 18,000 units described in a database system formed by 90,000 informative files and 1,130,000 images” (ASIRI – Archivio Storico IRI, Il Progetto, http://213.199.9.13/archivioni/progetto/fr_descrizione.html). For a general description of IRI’s archives see L’Archivio Storico IRI, in F. Russoillo (edited by), L’IRI nella storia d’Italia. Problemi e prospettive di ricerca, Rome, Edizindustria, 2003.

\(^{36}\) At present, these are the digital records available: all the records preserved in a repository at the Central Italian Archives (form 1933 to 1945-47); the proceedings and the statutes of the companies included in the Archives with Red Numbers; one third of the annual balance sheets of these companies; important series belonging to the Archives with Black Numbers (board of directors, committees, inspectors’ relations and so on), the series of IRI’s balance sheets, of the reports to the Ministero delle Partecipazioni Statali and the magazine “Notizie IRI”. Together with these digital records, there are also consistency and topographic lists. The work of digitalization of the sources was carried out with the two already completed projects. However, there are new activities of reorganization under development in order to finish the transfer of all the materials on the Net in the IRI Foundation website. (see Fondazione IRI, Archivio Storico dell’IRI, http://www.fondazioneiri.it/inside.asp?id=14&tid_tool=1). In this page of the website, one finds the division of the three databases, which widens the classical definition of “two archives” based on the Red and Black Numbers. (see G. Bruno, I’ due archivi” IRI, http://www.mias.ccr.it/Documentazione/xml/File%20introdotivo.xml).


\(^{38}\) In the website, it is underlined that: “The records of the archives are ordered and preserved according to a double criterion, indicated by different colors that originally marked the spine of the binders. This distinction between red and black numbers, formalized in the list drawn up when the oldest records were to be deposited in the Central Archives, represents the formal aspect of the Institute that, since its beginning, applied two different “tracks” thus determining the creation of two archives for industrial reconstruction: • the General Archives of corporate practices (red numbers) collects the records ordered according to the object of the practice represented by the different companies controlled by IRI and its finance companies. From the 1950s, they used a filing plan and a system of numeric codification that structure all IRI’s participations in a hierarchical structure reflecting the operational and managerial model of the companies of the Group. • the Archives II with the practices of IRI offices (black numbers) includes all the records produced by the single offices in which the holding has been divided throughout its life. It preserves the official records, the company’s books (boards of directors, administrative board, and presidencial resolutions), correspondence, bookkeeping entries (ledger books, journals, inventories) and balance sheets of the Institute. The management of these records was totally separated and it was directly entrusted to the office producing it which had to deposit order and eliminate it. The description of the archival material was carried out according to some general standards. The descriptive model selected is that suggested by Isad, based on the principle of multilevel description in which each unit is represented by a specific description and by the description of the parts forming it, the informative structure is divided in areas of information and in general descriptive elements, valid for all the levels of the ladder. All the records were filed up to 1992 when IRI’s records were transferred to the Foundation. In that year the Institute became a joint-stock company. The archives between 1992 and 2002 was transferred to the company Fintecna” (ASIRI – Archivio Storico IRI, L’Archivio, Premessa, http://213.199.9.13/archivioni/archivio/fr_descrizione.html).
direct access to the digitalized archival documentation. IRI Historical Archives is the most relevant example in Italy of a single source, both extremely complex and well constructed, that no longer has a traditional organization. The change required advanced methods and the adoption of new electronic sources, not only for the inventory and the description of the funds, but also wider availability of digital reproductions of the archival records.

In the portal of the "Intesa Sanpaolo" group, including also "Banca Intesa" website - there is a section dedicated to the unified historical archives created in 2003 as the result of the aggregation of the large documentary patrimony of Cassa di Risparmio delle Provincie Lombarde, Banco Ambrosiano Veneto and Banca Commerciale Italiana. In addition to the rules for consulting the


40 The digitalization of the records was accurately described: "to work on the IRI archives, we used an IT inventory system of the funds as XML allowing the digital acquisition of all the original records according to the international rules ISAD and EAD. The system reproduces the structure of the funds inventoried (...). The model employed is a multilevel structure using 4 different levels of files: fond-subfond, series-subseries, archival unit and record unit, according to a succession of combinations reproducing the archival restriction of the records. The records deposited at the Central Archives were filed analytically and entirely acquired in digital format. For the records still preserved at IRI we used a filing regarding the archival unit apart from some typologies of records for which we needed a more precise filing. The digitalization regarded some specific series such as the registers created by the deliberative bodies of the Institute, the records of the board of directors and of the presidency, the four-year plans of the Ufficio Studi, the indexes of the Inspectorate Reports. All the files have registry information (title, chronological examples, composition, collocation) but for the fond and series files there are also historical and institutional information. The archival units have a description of each installment. The record units have a description and a section for the enclosures. The digital images acquired since 1994 required a particular procedure of monitoring which verified their integrity signaling the problems of consultation and we changed the original formats (TIFF, Jpeg) of the single pages in a different format (PDF) more efficient in terms of space and management of the consultation of the record. In total, we analyzed about 1,200,000 pages and only 3 thousand were no longer usable. We created 29,000 record units in pdf format with a dimension from 8.536 to 78.260.332 byte." (ASIRI – Archivio Storico IRI, Ricerca on-line, http://213.199.9.13/archivioin/bancadati/ri_descrizione.html).


42 See Banca Intesa, http://www.bancaintesa.it/.

43 See Intesa Sanpaolo, Archivio Storico, http://www.intesasanpaolo.com/scriptusr/0/scInvestor/ita/archivio_storico/ita_archivio_storico.jsp. In this page: "The history of the Group Intesa Sanpaolo dates back as far as 1563. Over the centuries, the bank’s many realities developed profound links and different types of relations with their territories. The records preserved in the banks represent an enormous source of knowledge for the scholars and all this must be available and valorized. (...) The Historical Archives represents the living memory of Intesa Sanpaolo: an instrument to understand and enhance its tradition, the development of the branches and the positive effects on the territory". Moreover, as underlined in the previous section regarding the Historical Archives – recently transferred from "Banca Intesa" website to "Intesa Sanpaolo" portal – "Following the mergers between Cassa di Risparmio delle Provincie Lombarde (Cariplo), Banco Ambrosiano Veneto (Bav) and Banca Commerciale Italiana (Comit), Banca Intesa is responsible for the management of the most important Italian private bank archives. The records are an essential part of the history of the banking system in the 19th and 20th centuries. In Europe, the archives of Comit and Cariplo are also considered to be the most relevant for their contents and the completeness of the material preserved. Moreover, Raffaele Mattioli’s papers (1895-1973) are an extraordinary heritage, considered an important testament regarding the intersection between banking and civil culture. Together the records provide data for the study of of thousands of companies, but also for research on the relations between the economic world and the political world and to reconstruct the emergence of the Italian economy at the international level." (Banca Intesa, Arte e Cultura, Archivio Storico, http://209.85.135.104/search?q=cachex.beQ0gM305MNWwww.bancaintesa.it/pur.jsp/Editorial%3FContentName%3DArchivioStorico%26CategoryPath%3D/PIU/Editoria/Informativa/Italiano/Arte%2520e%2520Cultura/Archivio%2520Storico+Banca+Intesa,+Arte+e+Cultura,+Archivio+Storico,+shl?dict=clink&cd=1&g=it). Finally, for a general picture of the archives of the Banca Commerciale Italiana, see AA.VV., Banca Commerciale Italiana. Archivio Storico,
archives, the logistical indications and the contacts with the archivists, this section of the website gives much information on the records patrimony, the genealogy and the historical profile of the three banks, their archival tradition, and other aspects of their rich patrimony of historical and economic resources. The attention is centred on inventories and catalogues, through an IT


See Intesa Sana Paolo, Archivio Storico, Patrimoni documentari, http://www.intesasana.com/script ISR0/ia/Invest/ita/archivio_storico/ita_patrimoni_documentari.jsp. On this page: “Banca Intesa historical Archives is the repository of the collective memory of many organizations [public and private], the pivot of many values arising from the historical heritage of three pre-existing banking groups. In fact, Banca Intesa’s new identity grew out of the wealth of differences. The Historical Archives holds all the records regarding Banca Intesa assets (clients, personnel, buildings and so on) and the evidence of past procedures (internal rules, circulars, operative handbooks). There are also many legal surveys.” Moreover: “Cariplo (with Mediocrédito Lombardo), Comit and Banco Ambrosiano Veneto played an extremely important historical role: the first two banks were leaders in the sectors of the Italian credit system, rigorously divided and ruled for many years according to 1936 banking law: saving banks, joint-stock banks, credit institutions. With them, it seems important to analyze a private bank such as the Banco Ambrosiano Veneto which promoted a process of aggregation at the national level. Cariplo and Comit have an old and solid corporate culture and a strong feeling of belonging of many generations; these systems can be interpreted as socio-political microcosms; many various capacities to develop the credit market, the economic and working policies: and guide roles in the cultural life of the country. In the culture of Banco Ambrosiano Veneto, on the contrary, there is more attention to income and a greater inclination to innovate services and products. This is a patrimony that cannot be renounced for the research world and that will be essential for the studies of economic, political, social and cultural history of the 19th and 20th century.”


integrated system as “GEA-Banca Intesa”, allowing a homogeneous examination of all the funds. However, for the creation of this database the three different archival patrimonies were kept, using a method of reference that follow the ISAD international rules, which provides for a hierarchical order of filing the records linked to the structure of origin. It is possible to consult these funds in many ways: through the visualization of the directory of the entire Historical Archives, narrowing the research to archival patrimonies and selected funds; through the direct examination of the inventory of each fund; through queries on the working environment (with a universal or specific research). The files obtained through this online research do not concern only the text of the inventory (for the folders), but they are especially informative (identification, producer and objects, archival history, access, additional information) and in many cases, provide links to the images of the original source (records or photographs) and other objects. Moreover, there are significant resources immediately available on the Net such as: the minutes, up to 1934, of the main structures of the three banks (Board of Directors of Banca Commerciale Italiana, Banco Ambrosiano and Banca Cattolica del Veneto, Central Committee of Charity of Cariplo); the outstanding

47 See Banca Intesa, Archivio Storico, http://gea.bancaintesa.it/archivio/index.htm. As highlighted: “With the computerization of the working process, increasing knowledge deriving from the Historical Archives is inserted and shared in the IT system for those who will continue this valuable activity in the future. (...) in 1998 the Banca Commerciale Italiana had already developed an integrated IT system for the Historical Archives in order to manage all the activities and save the existing data. It will be possible to simultaneouly research the inventories of the funds opened to the public, the files for the special funds (bibliographic, photographic and audiovisual materials), the stock book, the lists of transfer of the parcels, the data of the consultation service, biographic data, chronologies of companies and [to seek] answers to several important historical issues” (Intesa Sanpaolo, Archivio Storico, Inventari e cataloghi, http://www.intessanapo.com/scriptLibro/icsInvestor/ita/archivio_storico/ita_inventari_cataloghi.jsp). To this end, the following works are of great relevance: A. Gottarelli, G. Montanari, F. Pino, Gli studi d'uso dell'Archivio Storico Comit: ricerca storica e servizio di consulenza in un'epoca di accelerata transizione, in G. Tató (a cura di), Le Carte preziose. Gli archivi delle banche nella realtà nazionale e locale: le fonti, la ricerca, la gestione e le nuove tecnologie, Trieste, Associazione Nazionale Archivistica Italiana - Sezione Friuli-Venezia Giulia, 1999; G. Montanari, F. Pino, Un sistema informativo integrato per gli archivi storici: la funzionalità di GEA IntesaBci per l'utente Internet e per l'archivist, in “Archivi & Computer”, n. 2, 2001; F. Pino, Co-operation while preserving historical specificity: the experience of IntesaBci, in AA.VV., Archival Year. Series of Workshops dedicated to Financial Institutions’ Archives, vol. I, “Central Corporate Archives during and after mergers”, Francoforte, EABBH, 2004; G. Montanari, An integrated information system: the Computer Application of the IntesaBci Historical Archives, in AA.VV., Archival Year. Series of Workshops dedicated to Financial Institutions’ Archives, vol. II, “Archives and IT Solutions”, Francoforte, EABBH, 2004; A. Gottarelli, Le fonti Comit per la storia d’imprcisa, in AA.VV., Le carte operose. Gli archivi delle imprese nella realtà nazionale e locale: le fonti, la ricerca, la gestione e le nuove tecnologie, Trieste, ANAI - Sezione Friuli-Venezia Giulia, 2004; G. Montanari, L’unificazione gestionale degli archivi storici di BancaIntesa, in AA.VV., Rime in corso. Archivi pubblici e archivi d’imprcisa tra trasformazioni, privatizzazioni e fusioni, Bari, Edipuglia, 2006.


49 In fact, the records are described starting from a hierarchical structure divided in funds, series, sub-series, folders (or registers), instalments, sub-instalments and pieces, with a detailed guide regarding the funds and the series (see Banca Intesa, Archivio Storico, http://gea.bancaintesa.it/archivio/index.htm).


iconographic patrimony of Banca Commerciale Italiana; Raffaele Mattioli’s assorted records, regarding the saving of Banca Commerciale Italiana in the 1930s and the relationship with the majority shareholder, IRI. Finally, the section of the portal dedicated to the Historical Archives contains several pages dedicated to publications (guides, inventories and research studies), recommendations (conferences and congresses), and news.

An example of an experience that put the website of the company together with that of the foundation, the archives and the museum is Piaggio. First of all, from the portal it is possible to go directly to the website of the company with several pages dedicated to the history of the company from the beginning up to the present. The website of the company also contains information regarding the museum and the Historical Archives “Antonella Bechi Piaggio” (contacts and how to access the records). Another website is dedicated specifically to the “Museo Piaggio – Giovanni Alberto Agnelli”, with the history of the company, a description of the museum and a presentation of the collection of vehicles, engines and mechanical components, a link to the

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cultural events promoted by the institution\textsuperscript{63}. There is also a section dedicated to the “Fondazione Piaggio”\textsuperscript{64}, offering a short illustration of its origin and its aims\textsuperscript{65}, with detailed information on the Historical Archives, composed of 13 funds for a total amount of more than 150,000 documents and 3,700 records\textsuperscript{66} as well as a reference to its publications with particular attention to the “Quaderni” of the Foundation\textsuperscript{67}. Finally, it is necessary to mention the official site of “Vespa”, with a history of the scooter, a collection of the company’s main advertising campaigns and an extremely interesting catalogue produced for the 60\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of this motor vehicle\textsuperscript{68}.

Another company, “Officine Nazionali di Savigliano” in Turin, which was also the subject of a report during the conference in Spoleto\textsuperscript{69}, although it has a significant history in railways and in

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\textsuperscript{64} See Museo Piaggio – Giovanni Alberto Agnelli, Fondazione Piaggio, http://www.museopaggio.it/fondazione.html.

\textsuperscript{65} In 1994, as part of a project for the reconstruction of Piaggio’s history and the valorization of the company’s historical memory, the Foundation was created in accordance with the wishes of the young Chairman Giovanni Alberto Agnelli, Enrico Ross –Pontedera Mayor – and Gino Nunez – Chairman of Pisa Province. Piaggio, Pontedera Municipality and Pisa Province are the three founding members of the Foundation. It was created in order to valorize the relationship between company and culture, company and territory and it has an annual program. It is a point of reference in the local and national debate on current themes (...) as the research on technological innovation, the reconstruction of the industrial relations from the end of the 1800s up to now, the most complex and specific problems regarding European integration (...)” (Museo Piaggio – Giovanni Alberto Agnelli, Fondazione Piaggio, http://www.museopaggio.it/fondazione.html).


\textsuperscript{69} This is the Conference on “Archivi d’imprisca: stato dell’arte e controversie” promoted by the Società Italiana degli Storici dell’Economia (SISE) in cooperation with the Istituto per la Cultura e la Storia d’Impresa “Franco Monighetti” (ICSIM), which took place on 11th November 2006 at Chiostro di San Nicolò in Spoleto.
other fields, and an extensive archives, has only a few indirect references on the Net. Its patrimony is yet to be digitalized. Another different evaluation must be made for the websites of the municipal companies, which have another type of content and are vary greatly from one another in their areas of activity (electricity, gas, water, transportation, urban sanitation, milk); these sites include a variety of experiences, with general references to the history and evolution of each company, usually of straightforward informative value.

The website of the "Fondazione Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica F. Dattini", which was discussed during the conference in Spoleto in reference to the archives of the merchant of Prato, has many resources for scholars and is extremely detailed. In particular, the digitalized images of the iconographic database, the catalogue of the library and online volumes, the indexes of the journals and the newsletter stand out as extremely important and useful online sources.


heart of the Foundation, “the most important international institution working in the field of preindustrial economic history”, is found in the part dedicated to Francesco di Marco Datini and his archives, even if it is collected elsewhere. Indeed, the “Progetto Datini”, the ambitious initiative dedicated to the digitalization of the collection of letters (1364-1411) and to the achievement of a database including the corporate account books (1363-1416), was developed by the institution where all the records are kept: the Prato State Archives. The relative website, in addition to a description of the preserved archival funds, provides a history of the project, detailed news about the creation of a data and images archives and of a computerized database of the published letters. It also contains the link to the page dedicated to the online consultation of the Datini collection of letters, in an experimental version.

An equally important digitalized source is the archives “Mediceo avanti il Principato”, competently planned and realized by Francesca Klein, as an initiative of the Florence State Archives, which “includes the records of the Medici family archives from the 14th century to the half of the 16th, the period before the investiture of Cosimo dei Medici as Duke of Florence (1537).” The complete digital reproduction of these funds aims at putting the archives “at the disposal of users all around the world” in order to “simplify the development of historical studies.”

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76 Fondazione Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica “F. Datini”, Chi siamo, http://www.istitutodatini.it/gener/home.htm. In this page, it is stated that the Institute “was set up in 1967 by Federigo Melzi, Fernand Braudel, and an important group of scholars who made up the first scientific committee” and that “its principal aim was to smooth the way towards an international dimension of historic culture, facilitating the comparison among various research methods as well as supporting the training of young scholars.”

77 As indicated in the website of Prato State Archives: “The Progetto Datini had two main objectives: the creation of a data and images digitalization through the archivalization of the entire collection of letters preserved in the Francesco di Marco Datini archives (approximately 150,000 letters) and the creation of a database with all the descriptive data regarding the entire Datini archives (collection of letters and account books); The creation of a textual database with the 3,000 published letters preserved in the archives” (Archivio di Stato di Prato, Progetto Datini, http://www.archiviostato.prato.it/datini/).


80 Archivio di Stato di Prato, Archivio Datini, Corpus lemmatizzato del carteggio Datini, http://asypweb.otv.04x.it/asp4vryyaxasyn55g42tdbk45/CatForm01.aspx.

81 Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Progetto Mediceo avanti il Principato, http://www.archiviostato.firenze.it/Map/index.html. On the same page, it is underlined that the archives contains collections of private letters and records coming from the Banco dei Medici and that “This project of the State Archives gave birth to the creation of a database of images (color) of the entire fond, made up of 165 archival units defined as files of letters, installments or entire registers all defined as records.”
and, at the same time, preserve the extremely precious original records. In addition to the high quality of reproduction of the records (about the economic, commercial and financial activities of the Medici family), other strong points are the versatility of the research instruments and the digital reproductions, which can be enlarged, moved and rotated, thus allowing a better consultation of the records than of the originals. Moreover, through this fond, it is possible to access the code “Acquisti e Doni”, containing 28 letters to Cosimo il Vecchio, available at the Florence State Archives in digital format.

There are other significant examples of electronic sources for business history, similar in quality and contents to the archives presented during the conference in Spoleto. First of all, the Dalmine Foundation Historical Archives, made up of five different sections (records, photographs, architecture drawings, audiovisual and historical library), collecting the “patrimony of records produced or received by the company and its subsidiaries since 1906, when the company was set up. The archives gives testimonies of Dalmine’s business history, its technological and organizational evolution and its interactions with the territory and the community.” The website of the Foundation, in addition to an original iconographic selection, named “face to face” and a section dedicated to its many activities, includes an area dedicated to the Historical Archives and its computerized inventory, regarding “the Sections Records and Photographs. The site provides, along with an analytic description of the documentation, its total reordering, when possible, according to the original organization of the records.” The online consultation of the sections and those series inventoried up to now is carried out in two ways: searching through indexes or else, a free research, that allows the user to access accurate analytical files of the single archival units. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning the online availability – through a gallery of images of the factory and the company town – of the corporate photographic patrimony, composed of 15,000 images from the 1920s to the 1980s. The virtual tour is extremely useful and interesting.

86 See Fondazione Dalmine, http://www.fondazione.dalmine.it/.
87 See Fondazione Dalmine, Album Virtuale, http://fondazione.dalmine.it/album_virtuale/index.html. In this interactive section of the website, there are some 300 images coming from the Photographic Archives of Dalmine Foundation allowing visitors to reconstruct one century of the company’s history.
88 See Fondazione Dalmine, Attività, http://fondazione.dalmine.it/attività/attività.asp. As written on this page of the website: “The Dalmine Foundation promotes activities of study, research, training and dissemination of business history and culture, of technology history and organization, of social history, of industrial archaeology. All the areas of activity aim at valorizing the patrimony of records preserved by the Historical Archives of the Foundation, through projects of partnership with other institutes of research, preservation and training.” This section of the website contains the publications and, in particular, the “Quaderni della Fondazione Dalmine”, a series of monographic studies on themes linked to industrial history and culture. Furthermore, it gives a general picture of the Foundation’s courses, internships, tutoring for dissertations and, in particular, for seminars on diverse topics: business archives and archival activity, valorization of the historical patrimony of the company, sources for contemporary industrial history, photography as a source for industrial history.
The Eni portal contains some valuable resources as a short but effective history of the oil company and its brand\textsuperscript{94}, or the area dedicated to Enrico Mattei\textsuperscript{95}, that provides a schedule of events, information and the legal examination for the centenary of his birth\textsuperscript{96}, a biography, a chronology and a bibliography\textsuperscript{97}. However the most relevant part of the website is that dedicated to the Historical Archives, a priceless source for the study of Italian (and international) economic history of the last century\textsuperscript{98}, where one finds the section of records, with reproductions of the originals, a division according to specific fonds\textsuperscript{99}, and a graphic reconstruction of the structure of the record fonds\textsuperscript{100}.

\textsuperscript{94} See Eni S.p.A., La Compagnia, La Nostra Storia, http://www.eni.it/eni/intera.do?layout=la_compagnia&nmscommand=lc_1_archivio_storico&channelId=1073755885&nmenu=false&ncommand=openById&nparam=lc_1_archivio_storico&lang=it, Eni S.p.A., La Compagnia, La Nostra Storia, La Storia di Eni e del Marchio, http://www.eni.it/eni/realProgram.do?layout=la_compagnia&programName=lc_2_le_tappe&nmscommand=lc_1_la_storia_dell_eni_e_del_marchio&channelId=1073754605&nmenu=false&ncommand=openById&nparam=lc_1_la_storia_dell_eni_e_del_marchio&lang=it, Eni S.p.A., La Compagnia, La Nostra Storia, La Storia di Eni e del Marchio, http://www.eni.it/eni/intera.do?layout=la_compagnia&nmscommand=lc_2_marchio&nparam=lc_2_enrico_mattei&channelId=1073754608&nmenu=false&ncommand=openById&nparam=lc_2_enrico_mattei&lang=it. At the end of this page, there is a link to the video “Enrico Mattei, la storia”.


In this part of the site, one also finds the pages of the Historical Photographic Archives with an iconographic exhibition organized in series \(^{101}\) and those of the Audiovisual Archives with a list of the films and audio materials of the company. \(^{102}\) The portal also provides information about

\[1610634665&menu=false&mmcommand=openById&mmparam=lc_3_archivi_personali&lang=it\] In the first of these pages, it is stated that: “The records collected in the headquarters of the Historical Archives in Pomezia is the result of long term research and selection begun in the 1990s. Eni commits itself to secure all the records of the companies received during the years of the Corporation and to reorder all the documentation. It was necessary to examine all the offices, the repositories, the dismantled plants in order to acquire the existing historical patrimony, select it and collect it in one single place of preservation. In this way it was possible to preserve not only the records linked to the history of the Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi, but also those regarding the companies set up at the beginning of the century and linked to the research, production or commercialization of oil products; as well as records reorganized by Eni from other fields when the company was part of the system of Partecipazioni Statali. For this reason, the Eni Historical Archives is a point of reference for the people who wish to understand the origins and development of the Italian oil industry; including the company’s organization and how it conducted business: from the time it was set up in 1953 as a State-owned company. The records of the Historical Archives in Pomezia are described analytically, with specific software, kept in containers in an environment where temperature and humidity are constantly controlled. At regular intervals, the deposit Archives gives the Historical Archives the records no longer in use, thereby increasing the historical corporate patrimony. All records more than 30 years old can be consulted.”

\[1610634559&cmfTypeId=1004&portalId=0&lang=it\] See Eni S.p.A., La Compagnia, La Nostra Storia, Documenti, Struttura dei fondi documentali dell’Archivio storico Eni Sp.A., http://www.enti.it/enti/iternal.do?RID=@2mmDUI07xoidcmWopk&catId=

\[1610634670&menu=false&mmcommand=openById&mmparam=lc_2_fotografia&lang=it\] This page of the website states: “The Eni Photographic Historical Archives has 50 thousand black and white and color photographs, 200 thousand slides, 30 thousand negatives of various formats and types dating back to the past century. It is an extremely valuable photographic patrimony because of its contents, the authors and the photographic studios (...). The abundant assets of this photographic fond cover the history of Eni and many companies through a patrimony whose information can be easily found. As for other kinds of records such as film, a photograph gives information that goes beyond the simple image. (...) The filing of the material of the archives is carried out with the software used for all the records of the historical archives and with a specific photographic file created according to international descriptive standards. The file serves to find information about the image, links to the records archives and the cinema archives or to see a preview of the most important images of the series. The Photographic Historical Archives was set up in February 2005 after having created the perfect conditions for the preservation in Pomezia”. Moreover, see Eni S.p.A., La Compagnia, La Nostra Storia, Fotografia, Archivio Foto e Storia, http://www.enti.it/enti/iternal.do?RID=@2mmCE07xoidcmWopk&catId=

\[1610634437&cmfTypeId=1004&portalId=0&lang=it\] Eni S.p.A., La Compagnia, La Nostra Storia, Fotografia, Serie Agip, http://www.enti.it/enti/iternal.do?layout=la_compagnia&mmselected=lc_3_serie_agip&channelId=


\[1610634674&menu=false&mmcommand=openById&mmparam=lc_3_serie_enrico_matta&lang=it\] Eni S.p.A., La Compagnia, La Nostra Storia, Fotografia, Serie Enrico Matta, http://www.enti.it/enti/iternal.do?layout=la_compagnia&mmselected=lc_3_serie_enrico_matta&channelId=


\[1610634660&menu=false&mmcommand=openById&mmparam=lc_2_audiovisivi&lang=it\] This page of the website points out that: “The Audiovisual Archives collects all the cinema and video documentation in different formats produced by Eni and the companies of the group. The material provides an overall idea of the company’s development.”
the opening of the Historical Archives and a presentation entitled “L’Archivio storico. Fonti per lo studio della storia energetica italiana”\(^\text{103}\) and a “Web TV” with many interesting materials about Eni, its history and its records\(^\text{104}\). Finally, together with further links regarding other subjects (history, instruments, the archives tells and so on)\(^\text{105}\) there is a section dedicated to corporate communication\(^\text{106}\). The “Italgas” website presents a history of gas in Turin and Italy\(^\text{107}\), with an accurate description of gas production from the earliest stage of this company\(^\text{108}\). The section dedicated to the Historical Archives is limited to a general illustration of the records and the

The documentaries, produced since the beginning of the 1950s, give an account of the choice of methane, the building of methane pipelines, the technical work, the work abroad, the search for oil in complex areas, the cohabitation and cooperation with different ethnic groups. All of Eni’s history is told in the films – “signed” by famous or less important directors – in which the world of energy is shown. In addition to this material, there is a great deal of other audiovisual material: adverts to launch Supercomprimato gaso line (…), audio records of Enrico Mattei’s speeches, the 1950s newsreels and the most recent records of the shareholders’ meetings. See Eni S.p.A., La Compagnia, La Nostra Storia, Audiovisivi, Film, http://www.eni.it/eni/inside.do?layout=la_compagnia&msnselected=lc_3_film&channelId=1610634661&menu=false&command=openById&mparam=lc_3_film&lang=en; Eni S.p.A., La Compagnia, La Nostra Storia, Audiovisivi, Archivio dei Film, http://www.eni.it/eni/inside.do?RID=@2xl5h/0?soxidcmWopk&catId=1610634572&cnfTypeld=1004&sportId=0&lang=en; Eni S.p.A., La Compagnia, La Nostra Storia, Audiovisivi, Materiali sonori, http://www.eni.it/eni/inside.do?layout=la_compagnia&msnselected=lc_3_materiali_sonori&channelId=1610634662&menu=false&command=openById&mparam=lc_3_materiali_sonori&lang=en; Eni S.p.A., La Compagnia, La Nostra Storia, Audiovisivi, Materiali sonori, Archivio audio, http://www.eni.it/eni/inside.do?RID=@2wfe/0?soxidcmWopk&catId=1610634573&cnfTypeld=1004&sportId=0&lang=en.

See Centenario Enrico Mattei, Il futuro è di chi lo sa immaginare, La Memoria, Inaugurazione archivio storico, http://www.eni.it/cultura-energia/ita/memoria/programma_archivio_ita.htm; Centenario Enrico Mattei, Il futuro è di chi lo sa immaginare, La Memoria, L’Archivio storico. Fonti per lo studio della storia energetica italiana, http://www.eni.it/cultura-energia/ita/memoria/inaugur_arch_stor_ita.htm. In this last page, it is highlighted that: “In its Pomezia headquarters, the archives holds about 45,000 folders of records in addition to other materials such as photographs, audiovisuals, technical drawings and objects. The records patrimony can be dated back to the first years of the 20th century, when the core of Eni was first set up. Among the records that were ordered and described there are those created by Eni SpA, from its beginning in 1953, those of the first companies working in Italy at the beginning of the last century such as Agip, Aziana italiana petroli Albania (Aipa), Società petrolifera italiana (Spa), Società nazionale metanodotti (Snam), all companies that merged with Eni SpA, to mention some of the most significant examples”.


See Italgas, La società, Chi siamo, La produzione del gas, http://www.italgas.it/home_italgas/la-societa/chi-siamo/storia/prodizione.htm. This page underlines that: “Italgas Historical Archives contains the legal and official procedures, the administrative, organizational, operational and technical records of the Società Italiana per il Gas and many other companies which were part of Italgas Group from the 1850s up to 1967, when Italgas entered the system of the Partecipazioni Statali”.
initiatives to preserve the company memory\textsuperscript{109}, along with some news regarding the historic library, gas precursors and a permanent exhibition of gas [industry-related] objects\textsuperscript{110}.

The portal of “Enel” is a brief, but well-organized history of the company inserted into a general frame of reference\textsuperscript{111}. The part dedicated to the “Giuseppe Cenzato” Historical Archives is extremely compact and is limited to a description of the archival sources\textsuperscript{112}. However, the “Enelikon” website\textsuperscript{113}, representing “a common platform through which it is possible to access various records and information in digital format”\textsuperscript{114}, preserves a large quantity of high quality contents\textsuperscript{115}. In fact, this website has a photographic section linking other photographic archives to Enel’s iconographic database; a section dedicated to historical archives, which “started to collect the digital reproduction of many records preserved in Naples’ archives, starting from the documentation concerning the first hydroelectric projects in the South of Italy”\textsuperscript{116}, a section for the audiovisual files with historical films produced by the main Italian electric groups. Historical archives collect “records of more than 1,200 electric companies working before Enel’s nationalization from 1963, divided into eight territorial archives, currently accessible through a single system of inventory and presentation”\textsuperscript{117}. Among these, the “Giuseppe Cenzato” Historical Archives in Naples, which “includes the records for the Società Meridionale di Elettricità (SME), the Ente Autonomo Volturino


\textsuperscript{112} See Enel S.p.A., Attività, Novità ed eventi, Archivio, Scienziati- Artisti, Cenzato, http://www.enel.it/attivita/novita_eventi/archivio/scienziati_artisti/cenzato/. This page of the website states that: “the Enel Historical Archives in Naples hold a large part of the Archives of Società Meridionale di Elettricità (SME). This company, directly or through some of its subsidiaries and controlled companies, almost entirely managed the production, the distribution and the commercialization of electric energy in all the South of Italy. The entire corporate life of this company is documented by the records of this archives”.


\textsuperscript{114} Enelikon, Il progetto, Cos’è, http://www.enelikon.it/ikon/h3.dill/sylon_magazine_int/Fprogetto?group=x=Cos%27%27eS. This page of the website states: “Enelikon wishes to broaden the circulation of materials and records from territorial and organizational contexts far from each other, thus facilitating a wider knowledge of the difficulties regarding corporate life. Enelikon is a window on the achievements that describe the history of the Italian electric company and the everyday activity of people and structures that were leaders in the industrialization of our country”.

\textsuperscript{115} As underlined: “The working project plans the building (…) of a wider contents warehouse opened to internal and external contributions, and the creation of new channels dedicated to «new media», as multimedia products. The aim of this project is not only an increase of the contents; the main challenge is in the ability to offer resources and instruments of management of the large records patrimonies produced and preserved by the company.” (Enelikon, Il progetto, Gli sviluppi, http://www.enelikon.it/ikon/h3.dill/sylon_magazine_int/Fprogetto?group=x=Gli%20sviluppi).


and the Società Elettromeccanica Nazionale, is the only one to have an online link with the inventory, a research system and some thematic itineraries. The Photographic Archives is divided into three parts, the Enel Archives (with the collections, thematic itineraries and the new acquisitions), the Fond Giulio Parisis and the Fond Larderello. The Audiovisual Archives includes the Enel Archives and other historical funds. Moreover, the “Enelikon” website has a photographic gallery, a film club and a magazine. Inside the Enel portal, there are other significant resources such as the video library, the editorial series “Cultura e Industria” — entirely downloadable —, some online journals such as “Emporion”, the fortnightly magazine of geo-economy, the virtual visit to the plants and the itinerary of the electric landscapes. Finally, it is important to mention the website dedicated to the “Progetto geotermia” with an interesting series of multimedia resources on the history of this source of clean energy, whose exploitation nerve center is in the boraciferous area of Larderello in Tuscany.

The “Telecom” website offers a wealth of information as well as reproductions of finds regarding the company’s history, made up above all, by a detailed chronology, a collection of

118 http://www.enelikon.it/ikon/h3.dll/aiakov_asena_int/b0?subcategory=x=gerarchia;modulo=x=storico;archivio=x=Napoli;tab_left=x=2.
119 See http://www.enelikon.it/ikon/h3.dll/aiakov_asena_int/b21423?subcategory=x=gerarchia;modulo=x=storico;archivio=x=Napoli;tab_left=x=2;
120 http://www.enelikon.it/ikon/h3.dll/aiakov_asena_int/fistorico?subcategory=x=Ricerca;archivio=x=Napoli;tab_left=x=2;modulo=x=storico; Enelikon, Archivi storici, Napoli, Percorsi tematici,
121 http://www.enelikon.it/ikon/h3.dll/aiakov_asena_int/fistorico?subcategory=x=Percorsi%20tematici;archivio=x=Napoli;tab_left=x=2;modulo=x=storico.
122 See http://www.enelikon.it/ikon/h3.dll/aiakov_fotografico/tab_left=x=1;modulo=x=fotografico; Enelikon, Archivio fotografico, Fondo Parisiso, http://www.enelikon.it/ikon/h3.dll/aiakov_parosis_int/fparisiso?tab_left=x=2;modulo=x=fotografico;
123 http://www.enelikon.it/ikon/h3.dll/aiakov_larderello_int/larderello?tab_left=x=3;modulo=x=fotografico;subcategory=x=Fondo%20Larderello.
124 See http://www.enelikon.it/ikon/h3.dll/aiakov_cinerel_int/fcinemusic/tab_left=x=1;modulo=x=cinemusic;subcategory=x=Archivio%20Enel; Enelikon, Archivio Audiovisivi, Fondi Storici, http://www.enelikon.it/ikon/h3.dll/aiakov_cinerel_int/fcinemusic/tab_left=x=2;modulo=x=cinemusic;subcategory=x=Fondo%20Storici.
128 See Telecom Italia, Il Gruppo, La nostra storia, http://www.telecomitalia.it/cgi-bin/tiportale/TIPortale?ep=browse.do?channelPage=/ep/TGruppoTIlstory.jsp&channelId=8670&tabId=1&parentTypeId=8661&LANG=IT. This page of the website states that: “The Telecom Italia Historical Archives, created from the merger between the archives of Sip and Stet, is one of the biggest business archives in Italy and in Europe. It collects and preserves the records patrimony of the companies which were an important part of the economic and industrial history of our country”. In the website it is possible to “find useful information to better know the history of the many companies which formed Telecom. It is a long path that began in the 19th century continues.
photographs, a gallery of historical images (brands, activities, operators, workers and technicians, adverts, published material, plants, networks)\textsuperscript{127}, and a few "cult" videos\textsuperscript{128}. However, the most significant part is that of the Historical Archives with a description of the record and iconographic sources, the library, the newspaper and periodical library, the audiovisuals and the museum assets\textsuperscript{130}. In addition, this area contains several pages of short historical reports linked to industrial

through all the 20\textsuperscript{th} century until now. This path sheds light on the evolution of a strategic field of the Italian industry, the one of telecommunications, which changed the life of the Italian people”.\textsuperscript{126}

See Telecom Italia, Il Gruppo, La nostra storia, Cronologia, http://www.telecomitalia.it/cgi-bin/tiportal/TIPortal/ep/browse.do?channelPage=/ep/channel/default.jsp&channelId=9751&tabId=1&pageTypeId=8661&LANG=IT.

See Telecom Italia, Il Gruppo, La nostra storia, Cult photos, http://www.telecomitalia.it/cgi-bin/tiportal/TIPortal/ep/browse.do?channelPage=/ep/channel/default.jsp&channelId=12494&tabId=1&pageTypeId=8661&LANG=IT.


See Telecom Italia, Il Gruppo, La nostra storia, Cult movies, http://www.telecomitalia.it/cgi-bin/tiportal/TIPortal/ep/browse.do?channelPage=/ep/channel/default.jsp&channelId=9753&tabId=1&pageTypeId=8661&LANG=IT.

See Telecom Italia, Il Gruppo, La nostra storia, L'Archivio storico, Descrizione, http://www.telecomitalia.it/cgi-bin/tiportal/TIPortal/ep/browse.do?channelPage=/ep/channel/default.jsp&channelId=8661&LANG=IT&channelId=9443&programId=10936&programPage=/ep/program/editorial.jsp. In the page dedicated to the description of the archives, it is underlined that: "the Telecom Italia Historical Archives, opened in Turin in 1998, (...) is an extraordinary source for the study of the two largest network technologies of our country: electricity and telephony. (...) The consistency of the sections forming the archives gives a clear idea of its importance. The record archives is composed of 24 filed fonds, 18,000 archival units and other fonds yet to be filed. The oldest records can be dated back to the end of the 19th century, the most recent ones, at the beginning of Telecom. The iconographic archives contain about 64,000 images. The inventoried part, divided in 26 fonds, collects about 20,000 images (photo prints, negatives and slides) coming from the corporate journals «Cronache dal Gruppo» (Stet) and «Selezionando» (Sipel and Sip). The library contains about 3000 volumes on Italian and foreign telecommunications history. The newspaper and periodical library preserves 38 corporate newspapers of companies linked to the history of Sip, Stet and Telecom Italia, and about 450 newspapers of the fond ASCAI (Associazione per lo sviluppo delle comunicazioni aziendali in Italia). The audiovisual section owns films and corporate video on various formats (film, Betacam, VHS and others), concerning material for the training of the personnel, business communication and advertisements of products and services. The oldest records date back to the period before the Second World War, while the most recent are contemporary. The museum assets consist of more than 1800 objects, filed and put into a database that can be consulted as photographic records by users."
development. A more complete description of Telecom Italia Historical Archives can be found on its website with an explanation of how it was created, a large bibliography and the division of its patrimony in four sections. The section dedicated to the records archives is the most detailed: it includes a section dedicated to “Gruppo elettro Sip”, another to the “Gruppo telefonico Stet-Sip”, and yet another to the joint archives. A detailed history of the telecommunications industry, from the end of the 19th century until today, can be found in the area “L’Italia al telefono. Società, imprese, tecnologie”.

In contrast, the artistic-historical section of the “Pirelli” website, although it is part of the “Archivi & Futuro” project with Telecom and Olivetti, is less developed in terms of electronic sources, giving only a short history of the group and its traditional activity of tire production, as well as a brief account of the development of the company’s advertising and a photographic archives. Further information and images on the Pirelli Historical Archives can be found in the portal of the virtual museum of histories through images, the “WorldWideMetaMuseum”. The Association of Historical Archives Olivetti, which “aims to organize the large records patrimony it has been entrusted, and at valorizing it in Italy and abroad through exhibitions, studies, publications, conferences, meetings, and many other important initiatives”, publishes a website known for its

They are telecommunication devices and equipment, from the plants to the selectors, from the meters to duplex boxes, from the relays to the test benches, from public and private telephones to the working equipment.”


132 See Telecom Italia, L’Italia al telefono, Archivio storico Telecom Italia, http://italia.telefono.alice.it/archivio/index.html. As indicated in the first page of the website: “The iconographic and textual records here reproduced come mainly from the Telecom Italia Historical Archives, in whose newspaper and periodical library and library are preserved a large part of the sources that inspired this work.”


commitment to the historical memory of the company. The most developed part of the website is dedicated to the archives and "divided into several sections including books, photographs, journals, advertising posters and other material". The main fields (the library, the newspaper and periodical library, the video library, the photo library, the sound recording library, the advertisement library, the family archives, the business archives and the personal profile fonds) are described meticulously and in particular, the Olivetti Archives is reported in minute detail with a list of fonds and their presentation. The website of the Adriano Olivetti Foundation also contributes to the valorization of an extremely original economic and cultural experience.

The Istituto Luce is further unique Italian experience that puts together historical evolution and technological innovations in the field of communication. The Historical Archives of the Istituto Luce has been completely developed online. In fact, the Istituto website points out that: "The Historical Archives of the Istituto Luce is the only archives in the world that makes its patrimony freely available through the Net". The website allows online research (simple or advanced, of the newsreels and documentaries) "giving access to about 100,000 files with personal data of each record (from the documentary to the single newsreel report); from these descriptions it is possible to view the films in one of the provided formats". On the other pages, the text is continued with references to specific sections of the website.
the user can check the availability of electronic contents — the collections available — or browse in a section dedicated to a multimedia encyclopedia ("Raccolta") or follow a thematic path ("Luce sulla storia"). There are books linked to cinematographic works ("Un libro un film"), cultural and publishing initiatives ("Prisma"), "research studies on rural Italy and on its industrial and urban transformation" ("Viaggio in Italia"), films to be viewed in the virtual screening room ("Sala di proiezione") The "Community" — a place of comparison for users, either among themselves or with the editorial staff — is further proof of the abundance of this website. The electronic archives contain many personal accounts of great interest for business history, such as the films dedicated to the "Ermenegildo Zegna" textile industry, or the electrical appliance industry.

6. Other banks and Italian insurers online

Another relevant field is that of the electronic sources concerning banks and insurers. In addition to the "Banca Intesa" website, described above, there is other important material to be

by the Istituto (since 1924) and by private collections and audiovisual funds acquired by different sources. The patrimony is currently made up of 12,000 newspapers, 4,700 documentaries and other film typologies. This archives also preserves one million meters of unedited film, comprising the collection of Incom and Luce, currently catalogued and computerized. To this we must add 3 million photographs produced by the Istituto or elsewhere, which are being catalogued and computerized. The various newspapers go from 1928 to 1990 and among them there are the «Giornali Luce», created by the Istituto nel ventennio fascista, and a great deal of news from the republican period, purchased later on. The documentary fund includes the subjects produced by the Istituto between 1924 and 1943, the documentaries produced or distributed by the company starting from the period after the Second World War, and all the acquisitions of material produced outside the company (starting from the 1960s) (Archivio Storico dell'Istituto Luce, Archivio Luce, Chi siamo, http://www.archivioluce.com/help/chiusamo.asp).

See Archivio Storico dell'Istituto Luce, Archivio Luce, Contenuti, http://www.archivioluce.com/contenti.asp.


found; for example, in the ABI guide to the sources on the Net—of particular interest for the credit and financial system, in the Italian portal dedicated to the banks or in the portal containing a list of all Italian banks. Also the institutional website of the "Banca d'Italia" has links for the so-called "useful websites", and it gives access to significant resources about a variety of topics: the history of the institution, its publications and statistics, economic research and international relations, the video gallery, the "Paolo Baffi" library, the Museum of Currency and the Historical Archives. In particular, the section of the library includes the general book patrimony, the book funds and the collection of the "Paolo Baffi" library on microfilms, various catalogues and electronic sources. The section of the museum has an introduction, a photographic gallery and several references to the coin collection. This section of the archives has an introduction, the description of the archival patrimony and the research instruments available to scholars ("Archea" database, archives guide and other instruments).
The “Banca di Roma” of the “Capitalia” group\footnote{See \textit{Capitalia}, http://www.capitalia.it/index.htm; \textit{Capitalia}, \textit{Profilo Capitalia}, http://www.capitalia.it/pages/profilo.htm. The recent merger between Unicredit and Capitalia, with the subsequent creation of a banking group second only to HSBC in Europe, will have effects that cannot yet be evaluated on the organization of the archives and the historical memory of the various banks: see \textit{Banco di Sicilia}, \textit{L’Azienda}, \textit{La Storia del Banco}, https://www.bancodisicilia.it/f_storia.htm; \textit{Bipop Carire, Chi siamo, La storia}, http://www.bipop.it/chi_siamo/storia.shtml; \textit{MCC}, \textit{Profilo, La nostra storia}, http://www.mcc.it/mappa/selezionato.php?page=profilo/storia.html.}, is a significant example, especially the part of its website dedicated to the Historical Archives\footnote{See \textit{Banca di Roma, La vostra banca, Archivio Storico}, http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivioistorico/banca-di-roma, \textit{La vostra banca, Archivio Storico, L’Archivio}, http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivioistorico/archivio.html.}. This unified archives, holding the records of Monte di Pietà di Roma, Banco di Santo Spirito, Cassa di Risparmio di Roma and Banco di Roma provides the following: a reconstruction of the events linked to the preservation of the records patrimony of the various banks; the inventories of the funds; the initiatives of safeguarding and valorization of the materials; the studies and the publications; the ways of consultation and the cultural events\footnote{See \textit{Banca di Roma, La vostra banca, Archivio Storico, L’Archivio, Vicende dell’Archivio}, http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivioistorico/vicende.html; \textit{Banca di Roma, La vostra banca, Archivio Storico, L’Archivio, Inventari}, http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivioistorico/inventari.html; \textit{Banca di Roma, La vostra banca, Archivio Storico, L’Archivio, Tutela e valorizzazione}, http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivioistorico/tutela.html; \textit{Banca di Roma, La vostra banca, Archivio Storico, L’Archivio, Studi e pubblicazioni}, http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivioistorico/studi.html; \textit{Banca di Roma, La vostra banca, Archivio Storico, L’Archivio, Consulenza e Regolamento}, http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivioistorico/consultazione.html; \textit{Banca di Roma, La vostra banca, Archivio Storico, L’Archivio, Inventari, Casse di Risparmio di Roma}, http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivioistorico/cassainventari.html; \textit{Banca di Roma, La vostra banca, Archivio Storico, L’Archivio, Inventari, Banco di Roma}, http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivioistorico/bancoinventari.html.}. The page dedicated to the archival inventories, “made up of 18 volumes with introductions from historical and economic perspectives, for a total of more than 5000 pages”\footnote{See \textit{Banca di Roma, La vostra banca, Archivio Storico, L’Archivio, Studi e pubblicazioni, Monte di Pietà di Roma}, http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivioistorico/montepietainventari.html; \textit{Banca di Roma, La vostra banca, Archivio Storico, L’Archivio, Inventari, Banco di Santo Spirito}, http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivioistorico/bancoinventari.html; \textit{Banca di Roma, La vostra banca, Archivio Storico, L’Archivio, Studi e pubblicazioni, Casse di Risparmio di Roma}, http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivioistorico/cassarinventari.html; \textit{Banca di Roma, La vostra banca, Archivio Storico, L’Archivio, Studi e pubblicazioni, Banco di Roma}, http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivioistorico/bancoroma.html; \textit{Banca di Roma, La vostra banca, Archivio Storico, L’Archivio, Studi e pubblicazioni, Banca di Roma}, http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivioistorico/bancoroma.html; \textit{Banca di Roma, La vostra banca, Archivio Storico, L’Archivio, Studi e pubblicazioni, Banca di Roma}, http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivioistorico/bancoroma.html.}, has a detailed description of the various stages of the filing, ordering and inventory activities and includes the lists of the funds of the four banks\footnote{See \textit{Banca di Roma, La vostra banca, Archivio Storico, L’Archivio, Studi e pubblicazioni}, http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivioistorico/studi.html.}. The page of the studies and the publications has a bibliography for each bank, extremely interesting albeit, not exhaustive\footnote{See \textit{Banca di Roma, La vostra banca, Archivio Storico, L’Archivio, Studi e pubblicazioni}, http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivioistorico/studi.html.}. Finally, we should not have the detailed historical record of the Archival records of the four banks: see \textit{Banco di Sicilia}, \textit{L’Azienda}, \textit{La Storia del Banco}, https://www.bancodisicilia.it/f_storia.htm; \textit{Bipop Carire, Chi siamo, La storia}, http://www.bipop.it/chi_siamo/storia.shtml; \textit{MCC}, \textit{Profilo, La nostra storia}, http://www.mcc.it/mappa/selezionato.php?page=profilo/storia.html.}.

overlook the multimedia CD-ROM, edited by the Historical Archives of the Banca di Roma, with a video of the archives, a synoptic table and the history of the four banks that encompasses an account of their changing fortunes over the years, the biographies of the founders, a list of the managers, information about their historical headquarters and other useful information.

The “UniCredit” portal— one of the main European financial groups— includes historical references, analysis and research, an online weekly magazine, and the link to the website of the cultural patrimony, which offers a detailed reconstruction of the company’s history. This website is divided into three sections dedicated respectively to: “I nostri tesori”, with a presentation of the four areas of the cultural patrimony of the bank (historical archives, museum, records center and library; “Le origini del gruppo”, with a detailed corpus information, in-depth analysis and images about the history of nine Italian banks (Credito Italiano, Caritro, CarVerona, Cassamarmica, Cassa di Risparmio di Carpi, Rolo Banca 1473, Cassa di Risparmio di Torino, Banca dell’Umbria and Cassa di Risparmio di Trieste) that converged into Unicredit; “Viaggi nella nostra storia”, which shows a selection of subjects and testimonials of the past, with impressive images (“Un’opera editoriale nell’Italia del 1920”; “La propaganda del risparmio nel 1920”; “C’era una volta in Sardegna”; “Il Calendario: lo specchio dei tempi”; “La banca è un albero”; “Albero genealogico”). The patrimony of the Historical Archives is carefully described, but it is also possible to download a list of the funds available and information on ways to consult it.

The most important Historical Archives, that of the “Banco di Napoli”, is in the website of the “Istituto Banco di Napoli” Foundation, whose origin is strictly linked to the history of the

http://www.bancaroma.it/site/labanca/archivistichistorico/bancaroma.html. As indicated on the first page: “The studies and publications listed, although they do not provide a complete picture of what has been published on the history of Monte di Pietà di Roma, Banco di Santo Spirito, Cassa di Risparmio di Roma, Banco di Roma and of Banca di Roma, nonetheless offer a useful bibliographic support for the research. The selected texts include: complete works and reports of historical and economic interest; articles and chapters of miscellaneous volumes; doctoral theses; master’s theses; dissertations written with the help of the archival records preserved in the Historical Archives; specific archival contributions regarding training and evolution of the historical archives that were converged into the Banca di Roma Historical Archives”.


See Un patrimonio culturale.unicredit it/.

Ibidem.

bank itself. The section dedicated to the archives contains a precise description of the records, which are divided into patrimonial records and account books of client deposits, a short historical reference; two research studies on the Servizio emigrati and on the Sacro Monte e Banco dei Poveri. The first study is about the creation of the inventory of the "complex correspondence, divided into lists, charts, and enclosure that were, exchanged among the general management of the Banco di Napoli and the branches, the foreign correspondents, the departments, the consulates and all the institutions that in some way had a crucial role in the management of the emigrants' remittances", a service which had been entrusted to the most widespread bank of Southern Italy. The inventory is also linked to two analytical indexes with the names of the emigrants and those of the institutions working with the Banco di Napoli for the management of the emigrants' remittances. The second study, beginning with the reordering of the fond of the account books of

174 See Istituto Banco di Napoli – Fondazione, http://www.ibnaf.it/. Regarding the Istituto, it is emphasized that: "[the Foundation’s] activities also include the management of the exceptional record patrimony of the historical Banche Pubbliche Napoletani and of the Banco di Napoli (16th-20th centuries) preserved in the Historical Archives (...), which is a fundamental point of reference for the city of Naples and all of Southern Italy" (Istituto Banco di Napoli – Fondazione, L’Istituto, Chi siamo, http://www.ibnaf.it/frameFramesetchiusi.html).

175 While "the first records concern the management of the profitable patrimony of the banks and the relative accounting, records with no accounting nature, the other records concern the activity of the collection of the bank deposits and issues. (...) They are account books documenting the deposits made in the banks. They had an analytical form." (Istituto Banco di Napoli – Fondazione, L’Archivio Storico, I Contenuti, http://www.ibnaf.it/frame/framesetarchiviocontenuti.html). In other words: "Its fonds can be divided in patrimonial records and account books of clients’ deposits, referring respectively to the internal life of the banks or to the relations they had with the clients. The conclusions, the dispatches, the agencies, the orders reflecting the management of the banks are part of the patrimonial records. There are also the Journals, the Pandette, the libri maggiori di terze, which list the revenues of the goods owned by the banks and the revenues of feudal taxes. The apodissari (account books of client’s deposits) are made up of deposit receipts and policies. The deposit receipt was a negotiable and transferable title, a money substitute which was invented by the public banks of Naples from the mid 16th century. The policies were used by the person who deposited the money so as to have it at his disposal." (Segreteria Archivistica per la Campania, Materiali, Archivio Storico del Banco di Napoli, http://www.archivistica
na.it/materiali/Bn_ARC/banco_napoli/Arc_stor_B_N.htm).

176 See Istituto Banco di Napoli – Fondazione, L’Archivio Storico, La Storia, http://www.ibnaf.it/frame/framesetarchivistastoria.html. This summary finishes with a comment according to which the records “we received are of high interest” and “the patrimony currently preserved in the Archives consists of 2,478 units for the patrimonial records and 276,595 units for the account books of deposit”.


179 The law 1st February 1901, n. 24 gave permission to the Banco di Napoli to safeguard, use and transfer the savings. This law had two purposes: a) to destroy the activity of private bankers which tended to monopolize emigrants’ savings; b) to ensure the transmission of the remittances to Italy without dispersion or misappropriation. This inventory is structured keeping in mind the complex system that the Banco di Napoli had set up in order to provide accurate and honest management of the emigrants’ remittances. The 4th series collects all the record material regarding the organization of the emigration service, so that the circulars that the General management sent each day to its branches can be considered as extremely important. Also in this series are the Relazioni Generali on the organization, the management and the preservation of the emigrants’ remittances. These are records produced by the General management in cooperation with its foreign correspondents which can be considered as a cross-section of the economic and social conditions of those years. The aforementioned Relazioni, because of their importance, were sent from the General management to all the public and ethical institutions who provided services to the emigrants” (Istituto Banco di Napoli – Fondazione, L’Archivio Storico, Le Ricerche, Servizio emigrati, http://www.ibnaf.it/frame/semi_Fetemigrati.html).

180 While the index of the emigrants “was divided according to the geographical areas of residence, with the name of the emigrant, his/her address in the USA and the reference number of the series and folder where the name appears”, the general index “has three references: the name of the institution or of the correspondent, its ranking, and the folder” (Istituto Banco di Napoli – Fondazione, L’Archivio Storico, Le Ricerche, Servizio emigrati, Indice emigrati,
deposit of Sacro Monte and Banco dei Poveri led to the creation of a sort of register divided into two sections: with a name index and a place index. Furthermore, on the website of the Archival Superintendence office of the Campania region, it is possible to consult the inventories of the Banco di Napoli Historical Archives.

Some other important IT sources for this field two banks: “Monte dei Paschi di Siena” and “BNL”, whose websites provide a good deal of historical and archival information. The “Monte dei Paschi di Siena” has a multimedia source, with texts and images, but also a summary of its own history in an audio format. The area of the website dedicated to the historical archives has a collection of images and records that cover the most important stages of the bank up to the present. The user can link these resources to the website of the “Fondazione Monte dei Paschi di Siena”, with all the historical information it contains. In addition to historical material, the “BNL” website presents, a section dedicated to the Historical Archives with a description of the records and their inventory, from information on the management of the materials and their consultation. The contents about the available photographic patrimony and the exchange of


See Soprintendenza Archivistica per la Campania, Materiali, Archivio Storico del Banco di Napoli (inventari), http://www.archivistica-na.it/materiali/BN_ARC/banco_napoli/Banco_napoli.htm. The following inventories can be consulted through various categories (by text, year, date, number collocation, or name): Patrimoniale del Banco delle Due Sicilie - Affari diversi; Patrimoniale del Banco delle Due Sicilie - Lettere Ministeriali; Patrimoniale del Banco delle Due Sicilie - Patrimoniale del Banco delle Due Sicilie - Librerie di reggenza; Inventario del Credito Fondiario; Inventario del Collocamento dei Fondi; Indice onomastico della clientela degli antichi Banchi Pubblici napoletani durante il decennio francese (1806-1815); Inventario del servizio di Cassa di Risparmio; Fondo Patrimoniale del Banco delle Due Sicilie. Matricole 1881-1913.


See Monte dei Paschi di Siena, La Banca, Archivio, http://www.mps.it/La+Banca/Archivio/, some of the most interesting records of the Historical Archives of the Monte dei Paschi di Siena, can be found in this part of the website, each record with a precise description, and a selection of captioned images of the bank from the end of the 19th century up to the present, (see Monte dei Paschi di Siena, La Banca, Archivio, http://www.mps.it/La+Banca/Archivio/). Some of the most interesting records of the Historical Archives of the Monte dei Paschi di Siena, can be found in this part of the website, each record with a precise description, and a selection of captioned images of the bank from the end of the 19th century up to the present, (see Monte dei Paschi di Siena, La Banca, Archivio, Documenti, http://www.mps.it/La+Banca/Archivio/Documenti/Default.htm; Monte dei Paschi di Siena, La Banca, Archivio, Galleria fotografica, http://www.mps.it/La+Banca/Archivio/Galleria+fotografica/default.htm).


letters between Vilfredo Pareto and Maffeo Pantaleoni are particularly interesting. There are many other IT sources about the credit field, beginning with the sites of other banks, or cooperative credit banks, of rural and artisanal banks, of people’s banks and savings banks, not to mention other important resources regarding banking foundations.

As far as the insurers are concerned, in addition to the websites of each company with historical and archival information, we should not forget the value of an IT source like that of the

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188 See BNL [Gruppo BNP Paribas], Identità, Storia, Archivio storico, Documentazione, Il patrimonio fotografico, http://www.bnl.it/pagina.asp?Page=81; BNL [Gruppo BNP Paribas], Identità, Storia, Archivio storico, Documentazione, Il carteggio Pareto-Pantaleoni, http://www.bnl.it/pagina.asp?Page=79. As explained in these pages: “the records preserved in the historical archives of BNL are comprised of a large quantity of paper records and a considerable photographic patrimony. These are hundreds of images which trace the path of the Bank and its contribution to the history of the 20th century, a period of sweeping changes in the economic, social and cultural fields. The iconographic section collects a significant collection of posters with the first institutional and advertising campaigns”. In addition: “Among the records of particular interest preserved in the Historical Archives we cannot forget the letters that Vilfredo Pareto (Paris 1848-Cliny, Geneva 1923) sent to the colleague and friend Maffeo Pantaleoni (Frascati 1857-Milan 1924) between 1890 and 1923. In this period the two famous economists exchanged useful information for their studies as well as impressions and thoughts regarding a civil society in its transformation (the industrialization of the country, the open market, protectionism, socialism and fascism)”.


“Fondazione Mansutti”, which owns a library and an historical archives “based on the history of the insurance, documented - from its origins until today - from the economic, juridical, technical, and social point of view”. Its website includes: detailed information on the foundation’s patrimony of books, a section dedicated to the records of the archival fond, based on the company’s insurance policies, a gallery of posters preserved in the archives, the so-called “Quaderni di sicurità” and the catalogue of the library that comprises “a sort of bibliographic encyclopedia of insurers”.

7. Other electronic sources for companies, archives and museums in Italy

Up to now, the situation has outlined the presence of a large number of companies with remarkable historical and archival online resources – and yet one notices the unexpected absence of some of the most important Italian companies. This is largely due to the inconsistent development and use of IT sources, but also to the varying levels of importance those other organizations ascribe to the preservation of historical memory and the valorization of business culture—with consequent differences in policy. Another reason may be that, while new companies


194 See Biblioteca Mansutti, la Fondazione, la Biblioteca, http://bibliotecamansutti.it/home.php?ID=BIBL; Biblioteca Mansutti, la Fondazione, i libri, http://bibliotecamansutti.it/home.php?ID=LIBR. In the page of the library it is pointed out that: “The library owns about four thousand printed items about insurance history dating from the 16th century to the present. The collection of this precious material began 50 years ago and since then, we have continued to seek out old texts, and, at the same time, continuously update contemporary publications on insurance history”.
195 See Biblioteca Mansutti, la Fondazione, le polizze, http://www.bibliotecamansutti.it/home.php?ID=POLI. As underlined in this page: “The records of the archival fond is made up of more than 2500 policies collected from all over the world. It is sufficient to cite a few examples to understand the importance of the materials. From the oldest policy dating from 1582, completely handwritten – in which Bartolomeo Corsini insured the transport by sea of a cargo from the port of London to the port of Livorno - to the contracts that (at the beginning of the 17th century) first began to use a standard pre-written form. There are other policies, especially English, from the end of the 18th century decorated with elegant engravings; the policies on the life of the slaves; and the French ones against the risk of being called to fight or others, more recent, to invest the savings of the Bahilla. Finally, it is important to mention some collections of maritime policies that provide precise information on the insurance practices of the time. We would also mention the policies (from the second half of the 18th century) of the cod-fishing ships from St. Malo to the coasts of Canada; those of the Compagnia del Commercio working in Genoa between 1780 and 1800 and more than 250 policies with which, in seven years (1833-1860), 56 companies from Malta alternated to cover the ships sailing from La Valletta”.
196 See Biblioteca Mansutti, la Fondazione, i manifesti, http://www.bibliotecamansutti.it/home.php?ID=MANI.
197 “In the Middle Ages, the term “Quaderni di sicurità” referred to the account register on which the commercial companies recorded the essential elements of their insurance contracts, either as insured parties or insurers. Quaderni di sicurità is also the title of the catalogue of the works published in 1996 owned by the library: more than 1700 files representing the starting point of our book patrimony. Marina Bonomi, who looked after the filing, put all the entries into a single alphabetical list: authors, titles, curators, secondary authors, with different files, all cross-referenced. The most significant texts are illustrated by black and white or color photographs. Then there is also a list of the companies, agencies and institutions mentioned in the books and a chronological list and a subject list divided into two levels whose entries are categorized by geographical area, chronological data and themes” (Biblioteca Mansutti, la Fondazione, i Quaderni di sicurità, http://www.bibliotecamansutti.it/home.php?ID=QUSIC).
are set up with a website from the very beginning, older companies may find it more difficult to use the net to become known and to communicate.

Despite these shortfalls, it is valuable to complete the overview of IT instruments for business history and archives by examining other websites. Some of these are less important than the abovementioned sites or they are about less well-known entrepreneurial activities. However, given the significance of the conclusions that may be drawn from these evaluations, I will mention some further examples with no claims to giving a complete list of the available sources.

The "Fiat" portal, although very extensive and advanced, does not contain information about its archival records commensurate with its dimension and its history. The international website has a brief reconstruction regarding the evolution of its logo and a brief history of the company from 1899 up to the present and a page of links to the "Fiat Clubs" all over the world. The "Gruppo Fiat" website provides a more complex and complete description of the development of the company, (with reproductions of posters of the time, biographies of some personalities, a gallery of car models, and a historical documentary for each decade of the company). In a further "Fiat" website, one finds pictures of the brands and the cars produced over more than a century.

Information regarding the Historical Archives and some iconographies linked to the city, the people, the products, and the productive activity of the largest Italian company, can be found in an IT inventory "Immagini di Storia", created by a company that deals with "projects in the field of cultural elaboration and application of new communication technologies". Among the IT sources about the car industry within the orbit of "Gruppo Fiat", we should mention those regarding "Lancia" and "Alfa Romeo". While the website of the former offers only a brief

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200 See Immagini di Storia, I luoghi, Torino, Archivio Storico Fiat, http://www.immaginidistoria.it/luoghi.php?id=18. As stated in this page: The "Fiat Historical Archives has its headquarters in a Liberty style building, which was the first enlargement (1907) of the workshops in Corso Dante where the company was created. It preserves more than 5 thousand linear meters of records, from 1900 to the 1980s, regarding the various aspects of the industrial history of the Gruppo Fiat (administration, finance, personnel, production, communication, study office, technologies, planning) and of its products (cars, commercial vehicles, tractors, trains, airplanes, marine engines). To all this, we must add an iconographic patrimony of almost one million of photographs, photographic plates, negatives, thousands of posters and advertising sketches; more than 200 hours of digital films and video. A library of three thousand volumes on the history of Fiat, of the means of transport, of the companies and of the work concludes the content of the center". The images of these pages have dates and captions.


description of various aspects of the corporate history, the latter presents a reconstruction of its evolution from the company's origins up to the present as well as a specific website for the Historical Archives. This last IT source is interesting for its accuracy, its readability, its detailed contents and its innovative purposes. In fact, the Alfa Romeo Historical Archives contains a great deal of information regarding the creation of the archives itself, on its inventory methods and on the records preserved (photographs, technical publications, books and films, and an important collection of testimonies regarding its corporate life: balance sheets, folders, technical characteristics of the products and advertising), on its activities to valorize the patrimony of records and the guidelines for consultation. Furthermore, there is a precise description of the archival series and their consistency, with particular attention to the photographs, the technical publications, the drawings, the library and the film library.

See Archivio Storico Alfa Romeo, http://www.archiviostorico.alfaromeo.it/.

As underlined in the website of the archives: "Alfa Romeo has always focused on business history as an essential component of the evolution of the modern society and the development of business culture. This interest has two aims: to satisfy the growing involvement of the scientific/cultural world towards the history of the Brand, and to support the need of keeping the corporate image alive through its past. For this reason, in 1969, the chairman of Alfa started the creation of the Alfa Romeo Historical Archives. (...) After years of continuous and profitable work, the historical archives is a living and constructive reality" (Archivio Storico Alfa Romeo, Chi siamo, Intro, http://www.archiviostorico.alfaromeo.it/cgi-bin/pbrand.dll/ALFAAS_ITALIA/home.jsp).
dissertations that have made use of the archives, and it is possible to see – and download – two films entitled “Alfa Romeo, una tradizione che continua”.

A quite important website is that of the “Same Deutz-Fahr” group, a leading worldwide industry for tractors, diesel engines, threshing machines, and agricultural machines, with headquarters in Trefligio. This website has a section dedicated to the industrial history with a useful timeline and an entire section dedicated to the Historical Archives with information about how to access it, the company’s mission and its purposes. The site also has a search engine that locates information, data and reproductions from the large records patrimony (balance sheets, patents, calendars, catalogues, films, scale machinery and models, photographic material, projects and technical drawings, technical publications, advertisement, and so on). Moreover, the archives have made some corporate films available that can be seen directly from the website. Finally, I’d like to bring to the reader’s attention the section dedicated to the historical museum of the group with a representation of “some of the most important stages of the agricultural mechanization (...) with original iconographic and textual material”.

There are some other interesting websites for the motor vehicles industry such as that of the “Gruppo Pininfarina”, “one of the main suppliers in the motor field of Design, Engineering and Production of niche car services”. This website provides a film on the origins and the evolution of


See Same Deutz-Fahr Group, La nostra storia, http://www.samedezutz-fahr.com/it/museum.php; Same Deutz-Fahr Group, La nostra storia, Quattro ruote che lavorano, http://www.samedezutz-fahr.com/museum_it.html. As stated in these two pages: "the history of Same Trattori is the history of a genius and, at the same time, of a company that managed to gain a central role on the international scene. 75 years passed since the young Francesco Cassani presented the model of a tractor that anticipated the characteristics of the first four wheel drive tractor and a diesel engine manufactured in 1952. Although complicated, the development made continuous progress and turned into entrepreneurial maturity, a path fuelled by an extraordinary technological insight, a profound interest towards the real problems of the client, strong ambition and the continuous search for solutions to lessen the hard physical labor of farmwork. Over the years, the group became international with factories in Italy, Germany, Poland, India, and distribution companies in the main countries".


of the company and a section dedicated to the history, the individuals and the models, with a timeline, the biographies of the people who brought the brand to success, the history of its sophisticated design and the collaboration with other industries. The "Museo dell'Automobile" in Turin has, on the Net, a small historical reconstruction, a description of its collection formed by models of 80 different brands, various articles, an account of its record center and an internal search engine. The "Ducati" website has a textual and photographic history and an extensive list of the contents of the museum of this company, which was first set up to produce industrial components for radio equipment and then became one of the most famous Italian motorcycle industries. The history of "MV Augusta", created as an aeronautical industry and becoming one of the most famous motorcycle industries all over the world, is told in the historical reconstruction of its website and in the pages dedicated to the corporate museum.

We will now analyze a few other corporate museums whose IT sources are more or less developed. At the same time we will consider some specific Italian fields of industrial industry that
have adopted digital resources. In the fields of fashion and textile, there are many important websites such as: “Gucci”, with a timeline of the company from its origins up to now; “Salvatore Ferragamo”, with a corporate chronology and a section dedicated to the museum that collects and displays its creations; “Missoni”, with a section dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the company with photographs and films; “Gianfranco Ferré”, with a virtual museum of its collections with videos and images; “Benetton”, with a timeline and films dedicated to the 40th anniversary of the group; “Ermenegildo Zegna”, with descriptions of the company’s history and the woolen mill, with texts and photographic galleries; “Zucchi”, which has put together a web collection of the printing blocks used to handprint on cloth between 1785 and 1935. The “Fondazione Micol


Fontana has the material availability of the clothes produced by the Fontana sisters from the 1950s to the present, as well as related materials that impart historical and cultural value: fashion-plates (illustrations), embroidery and swatches, and an extensive photo archives of famous people wearing these clothes. This source provides abundant information – both online and on a CD-ROM – on the “records of 50 years of fashion that rendered the concept “made in Italy” famous all over the world”; there is also detailed information on the contents of the Historical Archives of the foundation.

There are other examples to be analyzed from the “made in Italy” in fields other than fashion: i.e. the development of design. First of all, the website of “Museo del Design Italiano Online”, which allows to access to an Historical Archives, made up of “more than 7000 files dedicated to companies, designers, products and entrepreneurs; here is a unique instrument to valorize both the history and the current affairs of Italian design, from 1945 until today”. A conceptually advanced website with a striking mix of texts and images is that of “Kartell”, the company set up in 1949 to produce plastic household objects. This site includes a photographic archives, a video, and a section dedicated to the museum where the visitor finds a reconstruction of the company's evolution and identity. It is also possible to “visit” the structure, and look for records according to the product, the designer and the technology.

Other significant IT sources are: “Alessi”, considered one of the most important companies of Italian design; “Fimag – Gruppo Guzzini”, which provides a fair amount of information for each operative company; “Venini”, with photographs and texts on work techniques as well as on corporate happenings. Finally, the “Richard Ginori” website is not only an IT source of [one of Italy’s oldest porcelain companies]. But has also become an outstanding example of accuracy, elegance and efficiency, paying particular attention to the section dedicated to the company’s manufacturing history in Sesto Fiorentino, and to the link with the “Museo di Doccia”.


233 Fondazione Miclo Fontana, 50 anni di moda – il fascino del made in Italy, http://www.micolfontana.it/. In this page, it is stated that: “The historical archives is the treasure of the Foundation, based on clothing created by the Fontana sisters in the period between 1950 and 1990; there are about 100 garments chosen among the most significant for the history of the atelier”.
235 Design-Italia Official Web Site, Museum of Italian Design, http://www.design-italia.it/italiano/museo.htm. Moreover: “The criteria for selecting the published contents provides for the presence of: files of Italian companies, products of Italian companies designed by foreign designers and projects by Italian designers”. Other similar websites include the “Collezione Permanente del Design Italiano”, the “Fondazione Anna Querci per il Design” and the “Fondazione ADI per il Design Italiano” (see Collezione Permanente del Design Italiano, http://www.triennale.it/triennale/permanente/home.html; Fondazione Anna Querci per il Design, http://www.fondazioneannquaerci.it; Fondazione ADI per il Design Italiano, http://www.fondazioneadi.org/).
236 See Kartell, http://www.kartell.it/global.aspx?idLingua=IT.
Museo Virtuale dei Bagni di Mare e del Turismo Balneare", formed by "ten galleries, 120 rooms, 3000 works such as paintings, engravings, posters, photographs and vintage finds, to document the evolution of people's relationship with sea bathing and beaches."\(^{239}\) It has many iconographic collections, a library and a search engine\(^{240}\). Another important website is that of "Tourismus", the website of the tourism museum in Merano\(^{241}\), which gives a significant picture of "two centuries of tourism history in Tirol, from both the tourists' and the local inhabitants' point of view."\(^{242}\). In the second case, we can refer to a few Italian websites, usually museums, dealing with the history of computers and technological innovation. First of all, the portal "Musei.it.net - Musei e Nuove Tecnologie", with many resources and, in particular, with a list - for each Italian region - of the companies specialized in creating IT and multimedia applications for museums, galleries, libraries and other cultural institutions.\(^{243}\) The website "Computer Museum.it" is dedicated to computer and IT history\(^{244}\), but it also has an exhibition of the most famous PCs and a chronology of four generations of electronic machinery, a media library of the historical images of Apple advertisements, a technical archive with more than one thousand models produced from 1970 to 2000\(^{245}\). Furthermore, it is worth mentioning five websites about IT evolution with a wide range of information, linked to the milestones in this field and of their respective activities: the "Museo Virtuale dell'Informatica" of the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche; the "Museo dell'Informatica e del Calcolo Scientifico", by AICA and CILEA; the "Museo on line" of the portal "Tecnoteca.it";

\(^{239}\) Balnea Museum, http://www.balnea.net/museum/index.html. The museum has an extensive collection of records and in general: "It pictures an historical view from the first therapeutic baths on the Channel at the half of the 18th century and from the birth of sea towns in Europe, Australia, South Africa and the USA, until the explosion of mass tourism in the 1950s." (Balnea Museum, Informazioni e link, Missione, http://www.balnea.net/default.asp?cmd=mission).


\(^{242}\) Tourismus. Museo provinciale del Turismo, Chi siamo, http://www.tourismus.it/it/chiamo/default.htm. As observed: "The Museo del Turismo Castel Trauttmandorff is a provincial museum dealing with the theme of regional tourism in its different aspects: as an economic section, as a social phenomena, as an occasion for encounter and cultural exchange, as an impulse and a result of social changes, as a cause of environmental and cultural changes and so on. These aspects are outlined in the museum from the point of view of historical analysis as well as for their current importance" (Tourismus. Museo provinciale del Turismo, Chi siamo, Linee guida, http://www.tourismus.it/it/chiamo/lineeguida1.htm). Moreover, it is to highlight the importance of the section of the website dedicated to the permanent exhibition and the accuracy of the transposition of the museum path on the Net. (see Tourismus. Museo provinciale del Turismo, Esposizione permanente, http://www.tourismus.it/it/esposizionepermanente/default.htm; Tourismus. Museo provinciale del Turismo, Esposizione permanente, Percorso museale, http://www.tourismus.it/it/esposizionepermanente/percorso.htm).


\(^{244}\) See Computer Museum.it, http://www.computermuseum.it/index.asp.

the “Storia Informatica e dei Computer”, by a private operator, the “FWT UNESCO Computer Museum, Museo Didattico di Storia dell’Informatica”, currently underway in Padova.

We could go on indefinitely, following the path of the various groups divided according to corporate field, or else, finding specific unique initiatives on the Net, in order to give a more detailed picture of the situation of business archives and history in Italy. However, IT sources develop so rapidly, even in the narrowest fields, as to go beyond the possibilities of this present report. Furthermore, we should consider the evolution of knowledge and its ‘contamination’, thanks to new IT and communication technologies that lead to the broadening of the spectrum of analysis and the dialogue among different fields of knowledge, including those on historical reconstruction. This does not make the work on Italian websites less efficient. Although it cannot be compared to work carried out in more technologically developed countries, IT development in business culture in Italy has showed remarkable consistency and variety. In conclusion, it seems that Italy has started to move faster and in the right direction. However, a better coordination of efforts is essential in order to gain a better overall strategy rather than the start-up of many disconnected initiatives. This field is extremely interesting, not only for archivists and IT workers, but also for economic and business historians. In fact, scholars in this field now have at their disposal new techniques and new materials that can put together traditional paper sources with electronic ones. We find before us a fascinating and demanding target, requiring a full and conscious use of this new frontier.

* This article is the anticipation of a broader work, currently in progress, based on a presentation by the author during the conference “Archivi d’impresa: stato dell’arte e controversie”, promoted by the Società Italiana degli Storici dell’Economia (SISE) in cooperation with the Istituto per la Cultura e la Storia d’Impresa “Franco Momigliano” (ICSIM), which took place on 11th November 2006 at Chiostro di San Niccolò in Spoletto.

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