

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

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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.

¹ M. Grandi, *Gli archivi italiani di 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 archivisti italiani e la sfida*

dell'automazione: *archivi correnti e nuovi documenti*, in "Archivi per la Storia", V, n. 2, 1992; M. Guercio, *Automazione e archivi storici*, in "Archivi e Imprese", n. 11-12, 1995; E. Boretti, *Le fonti e la diffusione dell'informazione: fonti cartacee, fonti elettroniche e Internet*, in P. Costanzo Capitani, E. Moretti, M. Rosati, *La gestione dell'informazione e l'utilizzo di Internet*, Firenze, Iunia, 1995; A. Valente, R. Sepe, *Internet and italian archives*, in "FID news bulletin", XLV, n. 6, 1995; A. Valente, *Internet e archivi*, in *Gli Standard per gli archivi europei: esperienze e proposte*, Atti del Seminario Internazionale (San Miniato, 31 agosto - 2 settembre 1994), Rome, Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali, Ufficio Centrale per i Beni Archivistici, 1996; R. Cerri, *Risorse archivistiche in rete*, in "Archivi & Computer", n. 2, 1996; E. Boretti, *Primi elementi di "webografia"*, in "Bollettino AIB", n. 1, 1998, <<http://www.aib.it/aib/boll/1998/98-1-029.htm>>; M. Grandi, *Gli archivi italiani su Internet*, Roma, Scuola Speciale per Archivistici e Bibliotecari, Università "La Sapienza", 1998-1999; F. Valacchi, *Internet e gli archivi storici. I possibili approcci alle risorse disponibili sulla rete e alcune considerazioni in merito ai servizi telematici offerti dal sistema archivistico nazionale*, in "Archivi & Computer", n. 3, 1999, <<http://www.storia.unifi.it/storinforma/Ws/docs/valacchi.htm>>; G. Abbattista, *Ricerca storica e telematica in Italia. Un bilancio provvisorio*, in "Cromohs", n. 4, 1999, <http://www.cromohs.unifi.it/4_99/abba.html>; M. Guercio (a cura di), *Il futuro degli archivi, gli archivi del futuro*, Atti del Seminario di Studi, Cagliari, 29-31 October 1998, in "Archivi per la storia", XII, n. 1-2, 1999; A. Zorzi, *Documenti, archivi digitali, metafonti*, in *I Medici in rete: ricerca e progettualità scientifica a proposito dell'archivio Mediceo avanti il Principato*, Atti del Convegno di Studi, organized by the Archivio di Stato di Firenze in collaboration with the Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento and with the Harvard University Center for Renaissance Studies at Villa I Tatti, Firenze, Archivio di Stato, 18-19 September 2000, <<http://www.archiviodistato.firenze.it/nuovosito/index.php?id=87>>, anche in "Archivi & Computer", n. 3, 2000, <<http://www.storia.unifi.it/PIM/AIM/metafonti.htm>>; G. Abbattista, A. Zorzi (a cura di), *Il documento immateriale. Ricerca storica e nuovi linguaggi*, in "L'indice dei libri del mese", dossier n. 4, May 2000, <<http://lastoria.unipv.it/dossier/index.htm>>; M. Grandi, *Gli Archivi in Internet: risultati di una ricerca*, in "La memoria dell'impresa", n. 4, May 2000, <<http://www.culturadimpresa.org/archivio/newslet/news-04/Grandi.htm>>; S. Vitali, "Archivi on line": *qualche riflessione metodologica*, in *Archivi storici e archivi digitali tra ricerca e comunicazione*, edited by the Dipartimento di Studi Storici e Geografici dell'Università di Firenze in collaborazione con l'Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Florence, 20-21 October 2000, <<http://www.storia.unifi.it/storinforma/Ws/archivi/ws-archivi-alia.htm>>; F. Klein, *Riflessioni a proposito di progettualità culturale e digitalizzazione documentaria*, in *Archivi storici e archivi digitali tra ricerca e comunicazione*, cit., <<http://www.storia.unifi.it/storinforma/Ws/archivi/ws-archivi-alia.htm>>; C. Vivoli, *Quale sistema informativo per gli archivi?*, in *Archivi storici e archivi digitali tra ricerca e comunicazione*, cit., <<http://www.storia.unifi.it/storinforma/Ws/archivi/ws-archivi-alia.htm>>; F. Valacchi, *Fonti archivistiche, risorse digitali e digitalizzazione*, in *Fonti digitalizzate. Problemi, metodi, esegesi*, edited by the Dipartimento di Studi Storici e Geografici dell'Università di Firenze in collaborazione con l'Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Florence, 19-20 October 2001, <<http://www.dssg.unifi.it/storinforma/Ws/archivi2/ws-archivi2-prog.htm>>; S. Vitali, *Navigare nel passato. Problemi della ricerca archivistica in Internet*, in "Contemporanea", IV, n. 2, 2001; S. Noiret, *Una lente italiana per accedere alla storia contemporanea in internet*, Florence, Istituto Universitario Europeo, 5 April 2002; G. Bergamin, *Progetti di digitalizzazione: strumenti e obiettivi*, in "Archivi & computer", n. 3, 2002; D. Bondielli, *I sistemi informativi archivistici in rapporto alle risorse telematiche: nuovi progetti a confronto*, in "Archivi & computer", n. 3, 2002; C. Salmini, *Bussole e ami da pesca. I siti archivistici come strumento per la ricerca: come cambia il lavoro dell'archivista*, in "Archivi & computer", n. 3, 2002; F. Valacchi, *Il web per gli archivi e gli archivi nel web*, in "Archivi & computer", n. 3, 2002; A. Zorzi, *Documenti e archivi per lo storico. Qualche prospettiva digitale*, in "Archivi & computer", n. 3, 2002; F. Valacchi, *I siti web come strumenti per la ricerca archivistica*, in "Archivio Storico Italiano", anno CLX, n. 593, July - September 2002, <http://www.storia.unifi.it/asidspt/ASI/Testi_online/valacchi.htm>; F. Chiocchetti, *Fonti storiche, fonti digitalizzate, metafonti. Qualche nota su alcune iniziative recenti*, in "Storia della Storiografia", n. 44, 2003; S. Soldani, L. Tomassini (edited by), *Storia e computer. Alla ricerca del passato con l'informatica*, Milan, Bruno Mondadori, 1996; M. Guercio, *Archivistica informatica: i documenti in ambiente digitale*, Rome, Carocci, 2002; S. Vitali, *Passato digitale. Le fonti dello storico nell'era del computer*, Milan, Bruno Mondadori, 2004; A. Criscione, S. Noiret, C. Spagnolo, S. Vitali (edited by), *La storia a(l) tempo di Internet*, Bologna, Patron Editore, 2004; P. Rygiel, S. Noiret (edited by), *Les historiens, leurs revues et Internet (France, Espagne, Italie)*, Paris, Publibook, 2005; L. Spinazzè, *La comunicazione scientifica accademica italiana nel mondo digitale: siti internet, biblioteche digitali, archivi aperti, case editrici universitarie digitali*, Tesi di laurea in Ricerca Storica e Risorse Digitali, Corso di laurea in Informatica per le Discipline Umanistiche, Università degli Studi "Ca' Foscari" di Venezia, Venice, 2005, <<http://eprints.rcis.org/archive/00004736/>>; F. Valacchi, *La memoria integrata nell'era digitale. Continuità archivistica e innovazione tecnologica*, San Miniato, Titivillus, 2006.

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 point² and requires a great deal of general coordination and follow-up. Grandi conducted a census of eleven business archives websites in 2000³ (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.

⁴ See *Fondazione Ansaldo, Archivi e Raccolte*, <<http://fondazioneansaldo.it/archivi%20e%20raccolte.htm>>; *Fondazione Ansaldo, Attività e Informazioni, Fondazione: cronologia*, <<http://fondazioneansaldo.it/fondazione%20cronologia.htm>>. In 2000, on the initiative of the Comune di Genova, the Provincia di Genova and Finmeccanica S.p.A., the “Fondazione Ansaldo – Archivio economico delle imprese liguri O.N.L.U.S.” was created, which is the first Italian economic territorial archives. In 2002, the website of the Ansaldo Foundation was created. (www.fondazioneansaldo.it).

⁵ See N. De Ianni, *L'archivio storico IRI su Internet*, in “Rivista di Storia Finanziaria”, n. 2, January-June 1999, <<http://www.delpt.unina.it/stof/2.htm>>, <http://www.delpt.unina.it/stof/2_gennaio_giugno1999/DeIanni2.2.pdf>.

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 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 *Ibidem*, 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 originals) 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 preso 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/qm1.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 hypermediality.

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 system¹⁰ that has dedicated a section to the “Italian portal of the world archival resources on the Net”¹¹, with a

⁹ A. Zorzi, *Documenti, archivi digitali, metafonti*, <<http://www.storia.unifi.it/PIM/AIM/metafonti.htm>>, <<http://www.archiviodistato.firenze.it/nuovosito/index.php?id=87>>.

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 *Il 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 *Il patrimonio documentario statale sul Web*, <<http://archivi.beniculturali.it/Patrimonio/ricerca.html>>), to the more relevant norms (see *Normativa*, <<http://www.db.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 archives¹². 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 *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 companies¹³. Piedmont and Valle d'Aosta have a web page dedicated to the inventories of economic archives¹⁴; Campania includes the inventories of the historical archives of the Banco di Napoli¹⁵; Puglia describes activities related to the stewardship of the archives of health authorities, transport agencies, corporations and city-owned enterprises, aid societies and

¹¹ See *RINVII, il portale italiano alle risorse archivistiche mondiali sul WWW*, <<http://archivi.beniculturali.it/link/21.html>>.

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>>).

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/FrameSet2ArchiviEconomici.htm>.

¹⁴ See *Soprintendenza Archivistica per il Piemonte e la Valle d'Aosta*, <<http://www.sato-archivi.it/>>; *Soprintendenza Archivistica per il Piemonte e la Valle d'Aosta, Progetto Inventari On Line, Tipo Archivio: Economici*, <<http://www.sato-archivi.it/inventari/Esp2.htm>>, <<http://www.sato-archivi.it/inventari/TipArch7.htm>>.

¹⁵ See *Soprintendenza Archivistica per la Campania*, <<http://www.archivistica-na.it/Home.asp>>; *Soprintendenza Archivistica per la Campania, Materiali*, <<http://www.archivistica-na.it/materiali.htm>>; *Soprintendenza Archivistica per la Campania, Archivio Storico del Banco di Napoli (inventari)*, <http://www.archivistica-na.it/materiali/BN_ARC/banco_napoli/Banco_napoli.htm>; *Soprintendenza Archivistica per la Campania, Archivio Storico del Banco di Napoli (breve storia)*, <http://www.archivistica-na.it/materiali/BN_ARC/banco_napoli/Arc_stor_B_N.htm>. In this part of the website it is possible to consult the following inventories: *Patrimoniale del Banco delle Due Sicilie - Affari diversi*, <http://www.archivistica-na.it/materiali/BN_ARC/Aff_div/cerca_aff_div.htm>; *Patrimoniale del Banco delle Due Sicilie - Lettere Ministeriali*, <http://www.archivistica-na.it/materiali/BN_ARC/lett_minist/cercabib.htm>; *Patrimoniale del Banco delle Due Sicilie - Verballi di reggenza*, <http://www.archivistica-na.it/materiali/BN_ARC/verb_reggenza/cerca_aff_div.htm>; *Patrimoniale del Banco delle Due Sicilie - Inventario del Credito Fondiario*, <http://www.archivistica-na.it/materiali/BN_ARC/credito_fondiario/cerca_aff_div.htm>; *Inventario del "Collocamento dei Fondi"*, <http://www.archivistica-na.it/materiali/BN_ARC/colloc_fondi/cerca_aff_div.htm>; *Indice onomastico della clientela degli antichi Banchi Pubblici napoletani durante il decennio francese (1806-1815)*, <http://www.archivistica-na.it/materiali/BN_ARC/clienti_banchi/cerca_aff_div.htm>; *Patrimoniale del Banco delle Due Sicilie - Inventario del servizio di Cassa di Risparmio*, <http://www.archivistica-na.it/materiali/BN_ARC/cass_risparm/cerca_aff_div.htm>.

charitable institutions, insurance companies, social security agencies, and credit institutions¹⁶. 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”¹⁷; 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 archives¹⁸.

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”¹⁹. 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

¹⁶ See *Soprintendenza Archivistica per la Puglia*, <<http://www.sabapuglia.it/home.asp>>; *Soprintendenza Archivistica per la Puglia, Attività, Gli archivi degli enti sanitari, di trasporto, delle aziende autonome e municipalizzate*, <http://www.sabapuglia.it/inventari_ass.asp>; *Soprintendenza Archivistica per la Puglia, Attività, Gli archivi degli enti di assistenza e beneficenza, assicurativi e previdenziali*, <http://www.sabapuglia.it/inventari_ben.asp>; *Soprintendenza Archivistica per la Puglia, Attività, Gli archivi delle banche*, <http://www.sabapuglia.it/archivi_istituti_credito.asp>.

¹⁷ See *Soprintendenza Archivistica per il Veneto, Progetti in corso, Archivio Lanerossi*, <<http://www.archivi.beniculturali.it/SAVE/Progetti.htm>>, <<http://www.archivi.beniculturali.it/SAVE/Lanerossi.htm>>.

¹⁸ See *Soprintendenza Archivistica per la Sardegna*, <<http://www.sacasardegna.org/>>; *Soprintendenza Archivistica per la Sardegna, Gli archivi privati*, <http://www.sacasardegna.org/read_topic.php?id=23>, <http://www.sacasardegna.org/read_topic.php?id=24>, <http://www.sacasardegna.org/read_topic.php?id=25>, <http://www.sacasardegna.org/read_topic.php?id=26>, <http://www.sacasardegna.org/read_topic.php?id=27>, <http://www.sacasardegna.org/read_topic.php?id=28>; *Soprintendenza Archivistica per la Sardegna, Miniere: luci, ombre, identità, territorio*, <<http://www.sacasardegna.org/site/cd1/homepage.htm>>; *Soprintendenza Archivistica per la Sardegna, Galleria Immagini di Archivi privati*, <http://www.sacasardegna.org/galleria_immagini.php?category=Immagini%20Archivi%20Privati>.

¹⁹ *Sistema informativo unificato per le Soprintendenze archivistiche*, <<http://siusa.signum.sns.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 keepers²¹, 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 results²³ providing a

²⁰ *Sistema informativo unificato per le Soprintendenze archivistiche, Informazioni*, <<http://siusa.signum.sns.it/info.html>>.

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 fonds 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.signum.sns.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 though 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 archivistici – 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 archivistici – 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 archivistici – 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 archivistici – 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 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 companies²⁴.

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

General list of the complexes” Typology: producer). At the same time it is possible to pick out 90 sources referring to economic organizations or enterprises and 189 sources referring to credit institutions, insurance companies and social security agencies in the category “Soggetti produttori – Enti”. (“Producers – Bodies”). As well as it is possible to pick out 49 sources referring to economic organizations or enterprises and 34 sources referring to credit institutions, insurance companies and social security agencies in the category “Keepers – Typology”.

²⁴ See *Sistema informativo unificato per le Soprintendenze archivistiche, Complessi archivistici – Lista dei fondi*, <http://siusua.signum.sns.it/cgi-bin/RSOLSearchSiusa.pl?_op=search&_entrylevel=11&_additionalfield=tipologia&_additionalvalue=fondo%20e%20%20iperfondo&_ecclesia=NO&_selectby=SI&_tipofondi=liste>; *Sistema informativo unificato per le Soprintendenze archivistiche, Complessi archivistici – Lista generale dei complessi*, <http://siusua.signum.sns.it/cgi-bin/RSOLSearchSiusa.pl?_op=search&_entrylevel=11&_additionalfield=tipologia&_ecclesia=NO&_selectby=SI&_tipofondi=fondi>; *Sistema informativo unificato per le Soprintendenze archivistiche, Soggetti produttori – Enti*, <http://siusua.signum.sns.it/cgi-bin/RSOLSearchSiusa.pl?_useinternal=&_selectbycompilationdate=&_op=search&_livello=1&_func=searchsprod&_entrylevel=21&_additionalfield=&_additionalvalue=&_language=ita&_ecclesia=NO&_selectby=SI>; *Sistema informativo unificato per le Soprintendenze archivistiche, Soggetti conservatori – Tipologia*, <http://siusua.signum.sns.it/tipologia_frame_center.html>, <http://siusua.signum.sns.it/cgi-bin/RSOLSearchSiusa.pl?_op=search&_livello=1&_func=searchconservatore&_entrylevel=8&_additionalfield=tipologia&_additionalvalue=ente%20economico/impresa&_language=ita&_ecclesia=NO&_selectby=SI>, <http://siusua.signum.sns.it/cgi-bin/RSOLSearchSiusa.pl?_op=search&_livello=1&_func=searchconservatore&_entrylevel=8&_additionalfield=tipologia&_additionalvalue=ente%20di%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”²⁶. 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 architectures²⁷. 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)²⁸. Finally, the section dedicated to the innovations of the portal is extremely useful. It offers a variety of information and updates on business history²⁹. At the same time, the search engine is effective, allowing the user to surf the website to acquire the available documentation³⁰.

Another innovative portal is the one of the “Centro per la ricerca e lo sviluppo di Metodologie e Applicazioni per gli Archivi Storici (MAAS)”³¹ 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,

²⁶ *Archivi & Futuro. Conoscere il passato per progettare il futuro, Il progetto A&F*, <<http://www.archiviefuturo.it/cgi-bin/portali/aef/frontend/progetto.jsp?menuId=1>>.

²⁷ See *Archivi & Futuro. Conoscere il passato per progettare il futuro, Temi*, <http://www.archiviefuturo.it/cgi-bin/portali/aef/frontend/sommario_temi.jsp?idMacrotema=-1733448124>, <http://www.archiviefuturo.it/cgi-bin/portali/aef/frontend/sommario_temi.jsp?idMacrotema=4>, <http://www.archiviefuturo.it/cgi-bin/portali/aef/frontend/sommario_temi.jsp?idMacrotema=7>, <http://www.archiviefuturo.it/cgi-bin/portali/aef/frontend/sommario_temi.jsp?idMacrotema=1>, <http://www.archiviefuturo.it/cgi-bin/portali/aef/frontend/sommario_temi.jsp?idMacrotema=2>, <http://www.archiviefuturo.it/cgi-bin/portali/aef/frontend/sommario_temi.jsp?idMacrotema=5>, <http://www.archiviefuturo.it/cgi-bin/portali/aef/frontend/sommario_temi.jsp?idMacrotema=-1733427743>, <http://www.archiviefuturo.it/cgi-bin/portali/aef/frontend/sommario_temi.jsp?idMacrotema=-1733403818>, <http://www.archiviefuturo.it/cgi-bin/portali/aef/frontend/sommario_temi.jsp?idMacrotema=8>.

²⁸ See *Archivi & Futuro. Conoscere il passato per progettare il futuro, Gli archivi*, <<http://www.archiviefuturo.it/cgi-bin/portali/aef/frontend/aboutus.jsp?menuId=2>>.

²⁹ See *Archivi & Futuro. Conoscere il passato per progettare il futuro, Novità del portale*, <<http://www.archiviefuturo.it/cgi-bin/portali/aef/frontend/elencoNews.jsp>>.

³⁰ See *Archivi & Futuro. Conoscere il passato per progettare il futuro, Ricerca Avanzata*, <<http://www.archiviefuturo.it/cgi-bin/portali/aef/frontend/cerca.jsp>>.

³¹ See *Centro MAAS*, <<http://www.maas.ccr.it/>>.

audiovisual and so on) owned by private and public institutions”³². 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)³³, 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’Intersind³⁴. From the MAAS website, it is possible to connect to some specific research projects (“Labirinti”, “European CHronicle On-line (ECHO)”, “May Day”) and to the activities of specialized training of the Centro³⁵.

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

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.

³³ See *Centro MAAS, Introduzione all’Archivio Storico IRI*, <<http://www.maas.ccr.it/cd%20iri.htm>>.

³⁴ See *Centro MAAS, Progetti Realizzati*, <http://www.maas.ccr.it/fr_progettirealizzati.html>.

³⁵ See *Centro MAAS, Progetti di Ricerca*, <http://www.maas.ccr.it/fr_progettidiricerca.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 CHronicle 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 subject⁴⁰. Other sources with suggestions and links to a

³⁶ *Imita.db – Banca Dati delle Aziende Italiane*, <<http://imitadb.unisi.it/>>.

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>>).

³⁸ See *Imita.db – Banca Dati delle Aziende Italiane, Ricerca nella base dati*, <<http://imitadb.unisi.it/index.asp>>.

³⁹ See *Italian History Index: Economic, Financial and Business History*, <<http://vlib.iue.it/history/italy/economic.html>>.

⁴⁰ See *UNESCO Archives Portal*, <http://www.unesco.org/cgi-bin/webworld/portal_archives/cgi/page.cgi?d=1>; *UNESCO Archives Portal, Archives/Business and Labour Archives/Europe/Italy*, <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/portal_archives/pages/Archives/Business_and_Labour_Archives/Europe/Italy/index.shtml>.

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 Milan⁴¹.

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/cms.aspx?area=3&menu=52&overmenu=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/storiainrete/sto_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."

⁴² See *Imprese e Storia*, <<http://dipeco.economia.unimib.it/impreseestoria/>>; *Culture e impresa*, <<http://www.cultureimpresa.it/index.html>>.

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.”⁴³

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”⁴⁴. 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”⁴⁵.

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 articles⁴⁶, “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 links⁴⁷.

A further publication worthy of attention is the totally online journal “Tafter”, which publishes articles on the economy of culture⁴⁸. Other relevant publications that can be traced

⁴³ *Imprese e Storia*, <<http://dipeco.economia.unimib.it/impreseestoria/IT/intro.html>>.

⁴⁴ A. Lombardo, G. Paletta, *I perché di una rivista*, in “Culture e impresa”, n. 1, ottobre 2004, <<http://www.cultureimpresa.it/01-2004/italian/editoriale.html>>.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

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.

on the Net are: “Annali di Storia dell’Impresa”⁴⁹; “Archivi & Computer”⁵⁰; “Archivi” and “Il Mondo degli Archivi”, both edited by the “Associazione Nazionale Archivistica Italiana (ANAI)”⁵¹; “Le culture della tecnica”, the magazine of the “Associazione degli Industriali Metallurgici Meccanici ed Affini (AMMA)”⁵²; “Rivista di Storia Finanziaria”, in collaboration with the Sezione di Storia Economica “Corrado Barbagallo” of the Dipartimento di Analisi dei Processi Economico-Sociali, Linguistici, Produttivi e Territoriali of the Università degli Studi di Napoli “Federico II” and the “Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerca per la Storia Finanziaria Italiana (CIRSFI)”⁵³; “Harvard Business Review”, in its Italian edition⁵⁴.

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

Tafer. Cultura è sviluppo, Articoli, Aziende, <<http://www.tafer.it/elenco.asp?idcat=1&idsottocat=20>>, *Tafer. Cultura è sviluppo, Focus, Cultura d’impresa*, <<http://www.tafer.it/elenco.asp?idcat=11&idsottocat=28>>).

⁴⁹ See *Annali di Storia dell’Impresa*, <http://www.associazioneassi.it/User/pubblica_pres_annali.php?testata_id=8&last=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”.

⁵⁰ See *Archivi & Computer*, <<http://www.comune.san-miniato.pi.it/ospiti/archivio/archilab/Archivi%20&%20Computer.htm>>.

⁵¹ See ANAI - Associazione Nazionale Archivistica Italiana, *Pubblicazione della nuova rivista «Archivi»*, <http://www.anai.org/pubblicazioni/archivi_2006/archivi-2006.htm>; *Il Mondo degli Archivi*, <<http://www.ilmondodegliarchivi.org/index.html>>, <<http://www.ilmondodegliarchivi.org/index/channelid/112>>, <<http://www.ilmondodegliarchivi.org/index/channelid/63>>.

⁵² See A.M.M.A., *Servizi, Culturale - Storico, Rivista “Le culture della tecnica”*, <<http://www.amma.it/servizi/culturalestorico/campidiattivita/rivistaleculturedellatecnica/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.

⁵³ See *Rivista di Storia Finanziaria*, <<http://www.delpt.unina.it/stof/>>.

⁵⁴ See *Harvard Business Review*, <<http://www.hbritalia.it/default.aspx>>.

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 documental 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 site⁵⁶. 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”⁵⁷ 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)⁵⁸.

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/soc-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 fonds 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>).

⁵⁸ See *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_elenco.htm>.

newsletter⁵⁹. 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 museums⁶⁰. 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 province⁶¹; the photographic archives and the audiovisual archives of the Centro⁶², 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 institutions⁶³.

⁵⁹ See *Centro per la cultura d'impresa, Attività, Formazione*, <<http://www.culturadimpresa.org/attivita/05.htm>>; *Centro per la cultura d'impresa, Attività, Archeologia industriale, I luoghi dell'economia*, <http://www.culturadimpresa.org/luoghi_economia/home.html>; *Centro per la cultura d'impresa, Attività, Studi e ricerche*, <<http://www.culturadimpresa.org/attivita/studi.htm>>; *Centro per la cultura d'impresa, Attività, Pubblicazioni*, <<http://www.culturadimpresa.org/attivita/pubblicazioni.htm>>; *Centro per la cultura d'impresa, Attività, Esposizioni*, <<http://www.culturadimpresa.org/attivita/06.htm>>; *Centro per la cultura d'impresa, Attività, Fonti orali*, <<http://www.culturadimpresa.org/attivita/07.htm>>; *Centro per la cultura d'impresa, Attività, Biblioteca*, <<http://www.culturadimpresa.org/attivita/03.htm>>; *Centro per la cultura d'impresa, Archivio, Newsletter "La memoria dell'impresa"*, <<http://www.culturadimpresa.org/archivio/newslet/news-a.htm>>.

⁶⁰ See *Centro per la cultura d'impresa, Attività, Archeologia industriale, Banca dati di archeologia industriale in Lombardia*, <http://www.culturadimpresa.org/banca_arch.htm>; *Centro per la cultura d'impresa, Attività, Archivi e musei d'impresa*, <<http://www.culturadimpresa.org/attivita/01.htm>>.

⁶¹ See *Centro per la cultura d'impresa, Attività, Archivi e musei d'impresa, Censimento ricognitivo degli archivi d'impresa della provincia di Milano*, <http://www.culturadimpresa.it/attivita/Archivi/archivi_provincia_milano.htm>.

⁶² See *Centro per la cultura d'impresa, Attività, Archivi e musei d'impresa, Archivio fotografico del Centro*, <<http://www.culturadimpresa.org/attivita/Archivi/archivi10.htm>>; *Centro per la cultura d'impresa, Attività, Archivi e musei d'impresa, Archivio audiovisivo del Centro*, <<http://www.culturadimpresa.org/attivita/Archivi/archivi11.htm>>.

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”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”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)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 Italy⁶⁷. 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 company⁶⁸. In this area, three different types of research are possible among more than one

⁶⁴ See *Museimpresa*, <<http://www.museimpresa.com/default.aspx>>

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>>).

⁶⁶ See *Museimpresa*, *Attività*, *Settimana della cultura d’impresa*, <<http://www.museimpresa.com/cms.aspx?area=2&menu=24&overmenu=0>>.

⁶⁷ See *Museimpresa*, *Attività*, *Iniziativa*, *Pubblicazioni*, <<http://www.museimpresa.com/cms.aspx?template=attivita&area=1&menu=30&pageid=130&overmenu>>, <<http://www.museimpresa.com/cms.aspx?template=testo&menu=30&pageid=130&area=1&detail=345&overmenu=0>>. 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”.

⁶⁸ See *Museimpresa*, *Musei e Archivi*, <<http://www.museimpresa.com/cms.aspx?area=5>>.

hundred business museums and archives: methodological by field of activity, geographical by province, and brand by division of company brands⁶⁹.

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”⁷⁰. Among its objectives is a project for the creation of a “Museo a cielo aperto” (Open air museum) of industrial archaeology and heritage⁷¹, 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

⁶⁹ Cfr. *Museimpresa, Musei e Archivi, Ricerca merceologica*, <<http://www.museimpresa.com/merceologica.aspx>>; *Museimpresa, Musei e Archivi, Ricerca geografica*, <<http://www.museimpresa.com/geografica.aspx#risultati>>; *Museimpresa, Musei e Archivi, Ricerca per marchio*, <<http://www.museimpresa.com/marchio.aspx>>. The results of this research are schedules related to every entity, with information concerning the typology, the brands, the addresses, the websites of the companies.

⁷⁰ *Istituto per la Cultura e la Storia d’Impresa “Franco Momigliano”*, <<http://www.icsim.it/>>, <<http://www.icsim.it/istituto/institute.htm>>.

⁷¹ 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>).

also with the publication of a newsletter and the management of the “Centro di Documentazione sul Patrimonio Industriale” created in 2000⁷².

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”⁷³, gives – through its website – a series of extremely useful information on its editorial activities, on conferences, seminars and working papers⁷⁴. The activity of the “Associazione Duccio Bigazzi” for the research on business history and the world of work is described on the Net⁷⁵ with particular reference to the available documentation (Duccio Bigazzi’s bibliography and a thesis fond) and to the initiatives (meetings, publications and scholarships)⁷⁶.

The website of the “Associazione degli Industriali Metallurgici Meccanici ed Affini (AMMA)”⁷⁷, 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

⁷² See *Istituto per la Cultura e la Storia d’Impresa “Franco Momigliano”, Centro Documentazione sul Patrimonio Industriale*, <<http://www.icsim.it/beniculturali/beniculturali.htm>>, <http://www.icsim.it/beni_culturali/a5.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”.

⁷³ ASSI – Associazione di Studi e Storia sull’Impresa, *Chi siamo*, <<http://www.associazioneassi.it/User/assi.php>>.

⁷⁴ See . ASSI – Associazione di Studi e Storia sull’Impresa, <<http://www.associazioneassi.it/User/index.php>>.

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”.

⁷⁶ See *Associazione Duccio Bigazzi, La documentazione*, <<http://www.associazionebigazzi.it/documentazione.html>>; *Associazione Duccio Bigazzi, Le iniziative*, <<http://www.associazionebigazzi.it/iniziative.html>>.

⁷⁷ See *A.M.M.A., Chi siamo, Notizie storiche*, <<http://www.amma.it/>>; *A.M.M.A., Chi siamo, Notizie storiche*, <<http://www.amma.it/italiano/chisiamo/notizie.htm>>.

materials – manuscripts, printed volumes, maps and incisions – of technique history dating from 1466 to 1850⁷⁸. Another one is the catalogue of the Piedmont entrepreneurs⁷⁹, 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 1911⁸⁰. This repertory has a search engine that can be consulted by alphabetic letters or names⁸¹. 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”⁸², and a series of prestigious exhibitions⁸³.

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*, <<http://www.amma.it/italiano/servizi/archivio/libri-macchine/nt-frameset.htm>>.

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 borders 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*, <http://www.amma.it/italiano/catalogo_imprenditori/note-imprenditori.htm>).

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*, <http://www.amma.it/italiano/catalogo_imprenditori/note-imprenditori.htm>).

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

⁸² See A.M.M.A., *Servizi, Culturale - Storico, I Quaderni de “Le Culture”*, <<http://www.amma.it/servizi/culturalestorico/campidiattivita/iquadernideleculture/index.htm>>; A.M.M.A., *Servizi, Culturale - Storico, Collana “Documenti”*, <<http://www.amma.it/servizi/culturalestorico/campidiattivita/collanadocumenti/index.htm>>; A.M.M.A., *Servizi, Culturale - Storico, Collana “Archivi di scienza e tecnica”*, <<http://www.amma.it/servizi/culturalestorico/campidiattivita/collanaarchividiscienzaetecnica/index.htm>>

⁸³ Cfr. A.M.M.A., *Servizi, Culturale - Storico*, <<http://www.amma.it/servizi/culturalestorico/>>.

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 business⁸⁶. In its meticulously structured website, one may find news about the publications and the ongoing works of monographic research⁸⁷, 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 Italtel)⁸⁸, the library and the newspaper and periodical library⁸⁹, 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 history⁹⁰ 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 fonds of

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’Età 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”.

⁸⁵ *Fondazione ISEC*, *Chi siamo*, <<http://www.fondazioneisec.it/chi/chi.php>>.

⁸⁶ See *Fondazione ISEC*, *Cosa facciamo*, *La ricerca*, <<http://www.fondazioneisec.it/cosa/index.php>>.

⁸⁷ See *Fondazione ISEC*, *Cosa facciamo*, *Le pubblicazioni*, <<http://www.fondazioneisec.it/cosa/pubblicazioni.php>>; See *Fondazione ISEC*, *Cosa facciamo*, *Lavori in corso*, <<http://www.fondazioneisec.it/cosa/lavori.php>>.

⁸⁸ See *Fondazione ISEC*, *Cosa facciamo*, *Riordino archivi*, <<http://www.fondazioneisec.it/cosa/archivi.php>>.

⁸⁹ See *Fondazione ISEC*, *Il patrimonio*, *La Biblioteca e l’Emeroteca*, <<http://www.fondazioneisec.it/patrimonio/biblio.php>>.

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 fonds 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 Milan⁹¹. 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”⁹², two remarkable examples of the opportunities offered by IT sources.

The project “Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti»” in Brescia⁹³, promoted by the “Fondazione Civiltà Bresciana” and by “Fondazione Luigi Micheletti”⁹⁴, is the core of an integrated museum system⁹⁵ with an exceptional variety of resources. In the Musil website,

⁹¹ See *Fondazione ISEC, Il patrimonio, Fondi Antichi*, <http://www.fondazioneisec.it/patrimonio/fondi.php?id_gruppo=1>; *Fondazione ISEC, Il patrimonio, Imprese e fabbriche*, <http://www.fondazioneisec.it/patrimonio/fabbriche.php?id_gruppo=3>.

⁹² See *Fondazione ISEC, Marelli*, <<http://www.fondazioneisec.it/marelli/index.htm>>; *Fondazione ISEC, Marelli, Archivio*, <<http://www.fondazioneisec.it/marelli/archivio/index.php>>; *Fondazione ISEC, Marelli, Mostra*, <<http://www.fondazioneisec.it/marelli/marelli.htm>>; *Fondazione ISEC, La Breda produce. 1886-1994*, <<http://www.associazioni.milano.it/isec/mostra%20Breda/pagine/home%20page/index.htm>>, <<http://www.fondazioneisec.it/breda/breda.htm>>.

⁹³ See *Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti»*, <<http://www.musil.bs.it/flash.html>>.

⁹⁴ See *Fondazione Civiltà Bresciana*, <<http://www.civiltabresciana.it/>>; *Fondazione Biblioteca Archivio Luigi Micheletti*, <<http://www.brescialeonessa.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.brescialeonessa.it/micheletti/01_inizio.htm>; cfr. *Fondazione Biblioteca Archivio Luigi Micheletti, Scienza e tecnica nell’industrializzazione italiana*, <<http://www.brescialeonessa.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 territory⁹⁶. The activities of the museum revolve around the studies and the projects, completed or ongoing and around the publications⁹⁷. Moreover, the abundant heritage of the museum was collected in two different areas: the collections (inventories and files)⁹⁸ 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 library⁹⁹), with the availability of composite, qualified and wide online hypertext resources.¹⁰⁰

The “Museoweb dell’economia varesina”¹⁰¹, 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>>).

⁹⁶ See *Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti», Gallerie*, <<http://www.musil.bs.it/gallerie.html>>.

⁹⁷ See *Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti», Studi e progetti realizzati*, <<http://www.musil.bs.it/ElencoStudi?filtra=inArchivio>>; *Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti», Studi e progetti in corso*, <<http://www.musil.bs.it/ElencoStudi?filtra=inPubblicazione>>; *Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti», Pubblicazioni*, <<http://www.musil.bs.it/pubblicazioni.html>>.

⁹⁸ See *Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti», Inventari*, <<http://www.musil.bs.it/inventari.html>>; *Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti», Schedari*, <<http://www.musil.bs.it/schedari.html>>.

⁹⁹ See *Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti», Archivio*, <<http://www.musil.bs.it/archivi.html>>; *Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti», Biblioteca*, <<http://www.musil.bs.it/biblioteca.html>>; *Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti», Cineteca*, <<http://www.musil.bs.it/cineteca.html>>; *Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti», Emeroteca*, <<http://www.musil.bs.it/emeroteca.html>>; *Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti», Fototeca*, <<http://www.musil.bs.it/fototeca.html>>; *Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti», Iconoteca*, <<http://www.musil.bs.it/iconoteca.html>>; *Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro «Eugenio Battisti», Mediateca*, <<http://www.musil.bs.it/mediateca.html>>.

¹⁰⁰ 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.

¹⁰¹ See *Museoweb dell’economia varesina*, <<http://www.museoweb.it/index.html>>.

region and carried out by the Centro per la Cultura d'Impresa¹⁰². The website, apart from giving a first list of business culture museums and institutions locally and a bibliography on business history of that territory¹⁰³, has a research form and a "Museo virtuale delle imprese longeve" with a gallery of every company¹⁰⁴. 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 history¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰² *Museoweb dell'economia varesina, Presentazione*, <<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 reunite 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 varesina, Il sistema delle imprese*, <<http://www.museoweb.it/sistema.html>>).

¹⁰³ See *Museoweb dell'economia varesina, Cultura e territorio, Musei e istituzioni della cultura d'impresa*, <<http://www.museoweb.it/cultura1.html>>; *Museoweb dell'economia varesina, Cultura e territorio, Bibliografia*, <<http://www.museoweb.it/cultura2.html>>.

¹⁰⁴ See *Museoweb dell'economia varesina, Il sistema delle imprese, Imprese longeve della provincia di Varese*, <<http://www.museoweb.it/sistema1.html>>; *Museoweb dell'economia varesina, Museo virtuale delle imprese longeve, Visita le gallery*, <<http://www.museoweb.it/mappa.html>>.

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 archaeology¹⁰⁸; the website of the association

the presence of recurrent themes: the entrepreneurial apprenticeship in companies of the territory, the passage from employee to entrepreneur; the superimposition between living and working places; the entrance of the children in the company, frequently employed during the summer for manual work along with trained workers; the generation succession in its positive and negative nuances; the role of the women (wives and mothers) in the running of the company. Through the testimony, the entrepreneur analyses its work and that of its predecessors in light of the values system in which he recognizes himself: every story is a self-description, an ordering of memories and values increased by a coherence research. The decision of inserting film fragments in the story isn't just a technical solution of the multimedia language: it means clearing for the reader a privileged link that the self-description had in the elaboration of the historical profile. The profiles are accompanied by the images of the business archives, the family archives and the archives of the Chamber of Commerce in Varese. These are the photographs of the entrepreneurs, of the transformations of the offices, of the product realized, brochures, catalogues, and paintings. The lateral menu reconstructs the commercial dynamics of the company and puts them together with those of the family. Other information concerns the historical interest of the site, the brand collection and the letterhead (the business signs). The information created by the Museoweb are not one way information: the public can interact with the interested companies and with the scientific curators of the website sending records and reflections on business history." (*Museoweb dell'economia varesina, Presentazione*, <<http://www.museoweb.it/presentazione.html>>).

¹⁰⁶ See *Storia e cultura dell'industria. Il Nord Ovest dal 1850*, <<http://www.storiaindustria.it/index.htm?1>>.

¹⁰⁷ See ANAI - Associazione Nazionale Archivistica Italiana, GIAI - Gruppo Italiano Archivi di Impresa, <http://www.anai.org/attivita/N_gruppi/gdl_impresa.htm>, <http://www.anai.org/attivita/N_giai/giai_lista.htm>.

¹⁰⁸ See AIPAI - Patrimonio di Archeologia Industriale, <<http://www.patrimonioindustriale.it/PatInd/portale.nsf?opendatabase>>. For the IT sources on industrial archaeology: see *Museo della Cantieristica*, <<http://www.archeologiaindustriale.it/>>, <<http://www.ccm.it/cantieri/>>; ARCHEOIND, *Archeologia Industriale nell'alto Lazio*, <<http://digilander.libero.it/archeoind/>>; *Archeologia Industriale - indice*, <<http://www.istitutodistruzionesuperiore.191.it/arch%5Find/index.htm>>; *Archeologia Industriale a Roma*,

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 Bologna¹¹⁰; the website of the “Centro Studi sull’Impresa e sul Patrimonio Industriale” in Vicenza¹¹¹; 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 Recanati¹¹⁴; the website of the “Fondazione Famiglia Legler”, with a historical database on the enterprises in Bergamo (*Imberg.db*) from the Unity of Italy to 1952¹¹⁵; the website of the “Fondazione IRI”¹¹⁶; the “Forum di Omegna”¹¹⁷,

<<http://www.sturzo.it/archind/recu.htm>>; *Centro Studi Politici e Sociali Franco Maria Malfatti, Terni - Archeologia Industriale*, <<http://www.archeologiaindustriale.org/>>; *Archeometallurgia e archeologia mineraria*, <<http://192.167.112.135/SitoCNR/Metalli/archeomin.html>>; *Archeometallurgia del ferro*, <<http://192.167.112.135/SitoCNR/Metalli/ferro/home.html>>; *Archeologia Industriale – Impianti industriali*, <<http://www.storiaecultura.it/cornucopia/indici/iindu.htm>>; *Fornace Guerra - Gregorj*, <<http://www.venice2.it/gregorj/indexi.htm>>; *Crespi d’Adda*, <<http://www.crespidadda.it/cgi-bin/WebObjects/Valxer.woa/wa/page?id=1050406&lan=ita>>; *Museo dell’Industria e del Lavoro*, <http://www.sestosg.net/servlet/page?_pageid=54&_dad=portal30&_schema=PORTAL30&_type=site&_fsiteid=33&_fid=41632&_fnavbarid=12605&_fnavbarsiteid=33&_fedit=0&_fmode=2&_fdisplaymode=1&_fcalledfrom=1&_fdisplayurl>; *ar’rais. Associazione di Archeologia Industriale del Mediterraneo*, <<http://www.cinet.it/arrais/>>; *Centro per la cultura d’impresa, Attività, Archeologia industriale*, <<http://www.culturadimpresa.org/attivita/02.htm>>; *Istituto per la Cultura e la Storia d’Impresa “Franco Momigliano”, Archeologia Industriale, La coltivazione e la lavorazione del tabacco in Umbria*, <<http://www.icsim.it/lettera/lettera7/pag33.htm>>; *Ecomuseo delle ferriere e fonderie di Calabria*, <<http://web.tiscali.it/ecomuseocalabria/>>; *Ecomuseo del Biellese*, <<http://www.ecomuseodelbiellese.it/online/Home.html>>.

¹⁰⁹ See *Archivio del cinema industriale e della comunicazione d’impresa*, <<http://archindhi.liuc.it/home.htm>>; *Archivio del cinema industriale e della comunicazione d’impresa, i cataloghi*, <<http://archindhi.liuc.it/cataloghi.htm>>.

¹¹⁰ See *Museo del Patrimonio Industriale*, <<http://www.comune.bologna.it/patrimonioidustriale/>>.

¹¹¹ See *Centro Studi sull’Impresa e sul Patrimonio Industriale*, <<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>.

¹¹³ See *La Rivista di engramma, I musei aziendali veneti nel web*, <http://www.engramma.it/engramma_v4/homepage/33/link/vallini.htm>.

¹¹⁴ See *Il Paesaggio dell’Eccellenza*, <<http://paesaggioeccellenza.it/>>.

¹¹⁵ See *Fondazione Famiglia Legler*, <<http://www.fff.it/>>; *Fondazione Famiglia Legler, La Banca Dati*, <<http://www.fff.it/archivio.asp>>.

¹¹⁶ See *Fondazione IRI*, <<http://www.fondazioneiri.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 enterprise¹¹⁸; 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”)¹¹⁹; the portal of the “WorldWideMetaMuseum”, which is a meta-museum in continuous evolution¹²⁰; 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 content¹²¹; the websites of the “Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerca per la Storia Finanziaria Italiana (CIRSEFI)” and of the “Anagrafe delle corporazioni in Italia durante l’età moderna”¹²²; the area of the portal of Unioncamere

the foundation after the liquidation of IRI. Through the new website, it is possible to gain direct access to the data and news heritage regarding IRI’s 70 years of history, recently ordered and catalogued in the ARCHIVIO STORICO DELL’IRI, available on the Net. The graphics of the new website are the result of a careful iconographical research work on the field of IRI activity regarding images and communication. (...) From a technical point of view, in order to guarantee a better and faster updating of the information and the data, the website has its own CMS, a system of management of the contents, that will give the users a complete description of all the institutional activities of the Foundation. With the CMS the website becomes a work in progress other than an archives of important socio-economical data on our country, that can be easily consulted” (*Fondazione IRI, La Fondazione, In primo piano*, <<http://www.fondazioneiri.it/inside.asp?id=44&idNotizia=31>>).

¹¹⁷ See *Forum di Omegna*, <<http://www.forumomegna.org/>>.

¹¹⁸ See *Forum di Omegna, Fondazione Museo Arti e Industria di Omegna, Storia*, <<http://www.forumomegna.org/pagine/entita/storia/introf.htm>>.

¹¹⁹ See *Fondazione Luigi Einaudi*, <<http://www.fondazioneeinaudi.it/>>; *Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori*, <<http://www.fondazionemondadori.it/cms/>>; *Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli*, <<http://www.fondazionefeltrinelli.it/it/>>; *Fondazione Giannino Bassetti*, <<http://www.fondazionebassetti.org/it/>>; *Fondazione Edison*, <<http://www.fondazioneedison.it/>>; *Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei*, <<http://www.feem.it/Feem/default.htm>>; *Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli*, <<http://www.fga.it/>>.

¹²⁰ See *WWMM, WorldWideMetaMuseum*, <<http://www.wmmm.org/index.asp>>.

¹²¹ See *Centro Italiano di Documentazione sulla Cooperazione e l’Economia Sociale*, <<http://www.cooperazione.net/>>; *Centro Italiano di Documentazione sulla Cooperazione e l’Economia Sociale, Risorse online, Network*, <http://www.cooperazione.net/risorseonline_network.html>; *Centro Italiano di Documentazione sulla Cooperazione e l’Economia Sociale, Risorse online, Network, Database nazionale degli archivi cooperativi*, <<http://www.cooperazione.net/networkfind.asp>>.

¹²² See *Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerca per la Storia Finanziaria Italiana (CIRSEFI)*, <<http://www.dssi.unimi.it/dipstoria/biblio/cirsfi/index.html>>; *Anagrafe delle corporazioni in Italia durante l’età moderna*, <<http://www.dssi.unimi.it/dipstoria/corp40/home.html>>.

on “Gli Archivi e le Biblioteche delle Camere di Commercio”¹²³, with a “Guida agli Archivi Storici delle Camere di Commercio Italiane”¹²⁴.

The second part of this essay will be published in the next issue of *CultureImpresa*.

¹²³ See *Camere 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”.

¹²⁴ See *Camere Cultura, Gli Archivi Storici delle Camere di Commercio Italiane*, <<http://www.camerecultura.it/GuidaArchiviStorici/index.htm>>.