Survey on informatics
as applied to the italian state archives

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The Italian State Archives first appeared in the automatic data processing field following two trends of experimentation. The first one was to produce finding aids towards a still conventional research, and the performance of texts' information retrieval to allow the access to the relevant elements existing in the documents. On the other hand, the Institution activated an official enquiry on the setting up of contemporary archives on magnetic media. This was the preliminary step in order to program the allocation of the resources and the utilization of these archives, but most of all to program their preservation.

From the standpoint of their legal value, there were no problems, in that the 1963 statutory law on archives allowed for no differences between conventional and magnetic supporting media.

Indeed, the activity relevant to texts indexing and information retrieval took most of the resources available to the working group charged with informatics; anyway, the group had the possibility to evaluate priorities and planning. Some difficulties arose because external colleagues were somewhat reluctant to co-operate with, as the professional work was based upon a different philosophy. Hence, it was also necessary to consider the needs of being active in widespreading and illustrating these techniques and the new methodologies that were developing in the meantime. And that, taking into account the characteristics that the Italian-Archival-School had already established about arrangements, classification and research channels.

Such problems are broadly known to the majority of colleagues belonging to different schools : in our case these problems were faced during the experimental phase. Eventually, a detailed operational program started, whose concrete implementation took advantage of the opportunities offered by the exceptional Italian law envisaging the professional training of young unemployed people through a bi-annual appointment which might be endorsed. The law required an over-proportioned distribution of these young people between Southern and Northern Italy, and it called for training courses : in spite of these conditions, limiting possibilities and overloading the current activities, the State Archives took the opportunity to start and carry out some special projects devoted to the EDP of archival groups, however scattered or fragmented. The focusing of these special projects required a one-year time loop of researches, analyses and checking; the major choice parameters which were considered are the users'frequency, the interconnections and hierarchy relationship with other groups and the preservation of the original records. According to the latter, by introducing microfilm and reprography, we experienced that the setting up of large scale integrated references and finding aids produced a minor physical contact and consequently, a minor wear and tear of the original documents. Even more so, dealing with detailed and integrated indexes or, in some exceptional cases, with the full text, the researcher will avoid useless thumbing of sheets; moreover, the well-known feasibilities about editing and sorting multicopy outputs would increase this indirect preservation means.

Project Cadastre Lombardo-Veneto

The Cadastre data bank was set up envisaging two different process levels : the first aim is to make the documents available to different research types; the second one is to collect the elements for an

automated re-arrangement and selective inventory generating. The least possible informative unit chosen is the Cadastre particle as cristallized at the publication in 1828; its references are linked to the complex archival item where it is settled, and they are diacronically slid by date scanning. The format is connected to sub formats by joints where the repeatitive data are automatically referred to their archival identification by a reference code. The structural data are obviously assumed in the original occurrence; moreover, data are introduced concerning the district and the Commune, data declaring the owner (the so-called "ditta" or firm or juridical person) and his ownership's title. The paragraphs concerning the particle are identifying its nature (road, campaign, etc.), the classification code to which it was originally allocated, improvements, dimensions, tillages, bordering ways, possible religious or public destination, income. Most of these elements are designated by a code included in a controlled list. The convenience is evident to code in fixed-length fields the elements which are frequently constant; however, free-length fields were foreseen for the transcription of place and people's names, exploitation references of buildings, particularly the collector's notes. The lists are useful when the collectors come from different trainings, but it is necessary to up-date these lists with a new or a different definition, which is found in progress with respect to the original sample based analysis. The work in under course in Milano and Como.

Project "Intendenza"

This institute was introduced in Italy by the French domination and was maintained by the Bourbon regime till the Kingdom was unified. Many Southern archives kept the records of this Intendence who was in charge of all civil affairs, and maintained its jurisdiction until the establishment of the "Prefettura". The work is in progress at the State Archives of Bari, Chieti and Teramo, with the purpose of setting up a data bank, indexing and arranging an extremely untidy file. Thus the format is portable for the archives involved, and it is based upon the structural headlines referring to the item "dossier". In the latter, there is information offered by the official appellation as well as by the original classification and topic meaning; there is also information stored in single records that could be more extensive or explicative than the administrative statement. Both kinds of data are collected, where the original data are marked by diacritic pointers. In any case the collector has the possibility of inserting personal notes. The structural analysis will provide for the arrangement with regards to the first settlement. Indexes are foreseen which refer to place and people's names, to administrative activity subject matters, and, moreover, to extra records contents as enclosures, prints, drawings and plans, posters and leaflets. This material is frequent, but at the moment it is possible to consult it only by a random access. We would like to point out that this process considers every single part of the files as a module; that means that the extension to other homogeneous files will not involve supplementary costs as for analyses and procedures.

Project Notarial Archives

The enormous quantity of notarial records allocated in every Italian Archives, suggested a very careful approach to the planning of this project. Hence, it was decided that it was necessary first to obtain a

scanning of the units in order to create an essentially managerial data bank, and, second, to produce automated indexes for research in batch. The format contains unit codes defining data connected to identification, progressive page numbering, language, dimension, physical state, and chronological references.

As for the notary, the relevant data are : the notary's name, as written in the *intitulatio*, his Office and Profession, his appointment, and the Authority which appointed him. Another item which can be recorded, on explicit declaration, is the name of the customer whom the register is reserved to. The work is being executed in Bologna, Bari, Lucca, Como, Matera, Messina, Pescara, and Florence in a short time. There is a proposal for a format for single notarial acts, but, owing to the large bulk of documents, there are some doubts on the feasability of the project on such a large scale.

Project Telegrams of Coding Bureau (Ufficio Cifra)

The purpose of this process is to allow the bowsing of billions of telegrams received from and dispatched by the ministry of the Interiors, decoded and simply chronologically filed as of the start of this century.

The large quantity of the material as well as its poor physical condition forced the transcription of the texts on a machine readable medium, allowing the delivery of copies. Moreover, automatic indexes are sorted as research aids, through the collection of indexing headlines. Thus, at the Central Archives, the collection of telegrams data is in progress concerning the sender and the addressee, the relevant office, as well as the subject matter itself.

An important fact is that those indexes, retrieved by provenance, will undoubtly be an integrating source for the local archives since the National Authority; i.e. the Bureau of the Ministry of the Interior, kept the whole collection, whereas most of local bureau collections were lost.

Project "Venetian Patriciate" (Patriziato Veneto).

In this case, the aim of the process is that of setting up of a data bank for on-line research and initially integrated indexes by collecting data out of different series. At the Venetian Archives, the processing of the "Birth Golden Book" and the "Wedding Book" is under course. In these books information was recorded, according to ever evolving procedures, concerning not only direct-line ascendants, emancipation and coming of age, witnesses, but also the warrants of the legal evidence of the admission to the patriciate.

At the same time, the process of the *Segretario alle Voci* series is in progress : all information was registered therein concerning the appointment of the Patricians to various offices or institutes which are part of the complex organization of the Venetian Republic. The purpose of the latter work, besides the study of the Venetian Establishment, is the detection of the institutions as well as of the procedures necessary to be raised as officers, from the XVIth century to the fall of the *Serenissima*.

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In this case, the collecting formats bear, as key reference, the name of the person, and also they codify the presence, if any, of the extremely complicated formalities related to the start and the development of the political life in the Venetian Republic.

Projet "Maggior Consiglio di Venezia"

Having already set up a data bank of decisions that the main and most powerful institute of the Republic took during five centuries, it has been decided to add something to the information retrieval upon the full text available possibilities.

As the full text have been scanned in paragraphs regarding the diplomatic structure, it is available to generate indexes referring to people, offices, topics, measures, plans with regards to their settlement in the corpus of the decision itself. That means to safe the peculiar value of the context for re-inforce the meaning of the word has been used for. The work is under course at the microfilm and Restoration Center of State Archives.

Project "Diplomatico Veneziano"

The parchment *corpus* transcribed by Lenfranchi was the entry for I R on the full text. At this moment, we are processing each document with regards to the selection of indexing leads as anthro-ponyms, toponyms and *formulae.*
This work is in process at the same Center.

At this date, we have input about 2 millions records.

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