



*Associazione Nazionale  
Archivistica Italiana*

**ANAI address to the IFLA Satellite meeting (Torino, 13 / 8 / 2014)**

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Procuste, a Greek bandit, used to stop travellers on the way from Megara to Athens and force them to lie down on a bed. However, he offered a long bed to short people, and stretched them until they reached the whole length of the bed, while he made tall people lie on a short bed and then he would cut off all the protruding part of their legs.

Clearly, we wouldn't like to treat libraries, archives and museum holdings the way Procuste treated the unfortunate travellers.

We are not as unrespectful of our holdings and users as Procuste was of travellers and, as cultural heritage professionals, we have an obligation to collaborate in providing every kind of traveller to our separate domain with the best possible experience.

We are engaged in developing ambitious strategies to ensure the correct preservation, adequate accessibility, and best use of all the materials for which we are responsible.

There are many activities that can profit from an alliance among Library, Archives and Museum professionals, by enabling us to better safeguard and control the objects of our care. Digitization and digital preservation are an issue for all of us. However, in order to work together in an effective way, we must pay attention to the conceptual and methodological differences among our disciplines, which are due to the nature of the material that is the object of our respective care.

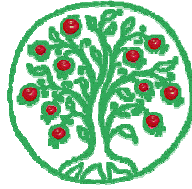
Archives, for instance (particularly those that are born digital), have to be controlled since the very beginning of their life, when they are made, received and kept as records and instruments for action and evidence of it. Their administrative and legal function remains evident in their content, form, as well as in the interrelationships of the records that build the archival fonds and its structure, even after the passage of time has given them a predominant cultural value.

This means that arrangement, description and access of an archival fonds cannot be carried out in the same way as they are for a library or a museum collection. At the same time, we must not work locked in separate ivory towers. There is a very thin line that we must walk to avoid opposite dangers.

A first danger is to reject collaboration seeing each other as separate worlds. A second danger is to favor an integration that would de-professionalise us, merging our disciplines into one.

We have to meet the challenges brought about by the digital environment through programs of education and training that, while preserving our disciplinary identity based on the distinctiveness of theories and methods, support and foster the creation of productive partnerships where professionals of each discipline contribute their unique knowledge to achieve common goals.

I adopt and share Enrica's thanks for everybody, particularly for Anna Maria Tamaro, Cecilia Cognigni and all colleagues participating in this complex meeting organisation.



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I regret Daniele Jallà, the new Icom-Italia president, cannot be with us but I know he sympathises with our enterprise and is actively involved in collaboration among Archives, Libraries and Museums, for instance those of the Waldensian Church in Torre Pellice, where four years ago the foundation meeting was held of MAB Italia (Musei, Archivi, Biblioteche – Professionisti del patrimonio culturale), a coordinating committee of professional associations.

I am sure we would try to avoid behaving as Procuste did. In fact having annoyed travellers too much, he was at last killed by Theseus.

Marco Carassi

President of the Associazione Nazionale Archivistica Italiana