

DIVISION IX/COMMISSION 41/WORKING GROUP ARCHIVES

CHAIR	Ileana Chinnici
VICE-CHAIR	Oscar T. Matsuura
MEMBERS	Brenda Corbin
	Suzanne Débarbat
	Daniel Green
	Tsuko Nakamura
	Adam Perkins
	Irakli Simonia

TRIENNIAL REPORT 2009–2012

1. Introduction

In the triennium 2006–2009, the WG Archives promoted an action of recognition of the archival documents concerning the foundation of IAU. The pretext was given by the fact that the year 2009 was the 90th anniversary of the establishment of IAU and the WG considered worth to start checking the conditions of preservation and conservation of such documents, in view of the approaching centenary.

As suggested by S. Débarbat, a Working Plan, entitled “IAU Archives” was proposed by I. Chinnici and approved by the WG members (see: Chinnici *et al.* 2009). The plan was mainly aimed at collecting information about the IAU archival documents kept in the countries first members (class B documents).

Following the plan guidelines, the search of such documents started in some countries, and the first results were mentioned in the triennial report 2006–2009.

The WG meeting held at the past IAU General Assembly (2009). During the IAU General Assembly held in Rio de Janeiro in 2009, the WG Archives has discussed the results and confirmed the value of the Working Plan and, consequently, the importance to continue the efforts for surveying the archival documents related to IAU in the first adhering countries.

It was remarked that many difficulties were met in contacting people in some countries and obtaining collaboration, mainly because of the voluntary nature of this kind of research. The creation of sub-committees was therefore discussed, in order to confer to the delegates a formal authority which could make easier their access to the resources. Moreover, the involvement of historians, librarians and archivists of each country in the WG tasks was strongly recommended.

2. Difficulties and ongoing actions

Unfortunately, the advancement of the work has slowed down and it has been halted in the past triennium. It has been difficult to establish the sub-committees and, in spite of the WG auspices, the collaboration of people involved in archives has been poor. This

is probably due to the above-mentioned voluntary work, to the spreading of such documents in several archives, which renders the search very laborious, and to an insufficient circulation of the WG plan in some countries.

However, Latin America is by far the area which has carried out the most advanced recognition, mostly under the impulse given by O. T. Matsuura (see Triennial Report 2006–2009). Recent news from Matsuura concern the elaboration of a model file card for the archival documents, proposed by C. Barboza (see: Matsuura 2010). The model file card is in preparation and it could be suggested as a standard for the IAU document to be inventoried and catalogued in other countries, when possible.

Finally, an inquiry on the conservation of the documents concerning the adhesion of Italy to IAU and the first IAU General Assembly (Rome, 1922) is in progress and a report will be published by I. Chinnici in spring 2012.

3. Next steps

The WG insists on the importance of continuing the actions and tasks of the Working Plan “IAU Archives”. At the same time, the WG is aware that it is necessary to re-launch it. Having identified the main problems in the establishment of sub-commissions on a voluntary base, in the spreading of the materials and in the insufficient circulation of the WG Plan, the WG recognizes that this last point can be the new starting point. The WG plan circulation can actually be improved by far, trying to involve other colleagues in the creation of a WG network for sharing and exchanging information. Before the next GA, the WG will ask the C41 Secretary to send the WG plan to all the C41 members, launching a Call for Volunteer Collaborators in all countries.

The aim is that of publishing a report as extensive as possible on the conservation of the archival documents concerning the establishment of IAU in all IAU participant countries, a work hopefully to be achieved before the centenary of IAU in 2019.

Ileana Chinnici
Chair of Working Group

References

- Chinnici, I. 2009, IAU Transactions, vol. XXVIII, Division XII, Commission 41, Working Group Archives, Triennial Report 2006–2009.
- Matsuura, O. T. 2010, “Report on the business meeting of the IAU Commission 41 Working Group – Archives in the IAU XXVII General Assembly in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil”, ICHA Newsletter, No. 9, pp. 6–8.