**CATALAN ARCHIVAL SCIENCE IS ALIVE AND KICKING**

This editorial is rather a mixed bag. The year 2014 came to a hectic close with the passing of Law 19/2014 on Transparency, Access to Information and Good Governance and the AAC’s participation in the seminar ‘Transparent Administrations’ organised by the Catalan Ministry of Governance and Institutional Relations. As you are aware, the AAC worked for a year and a half so that this law should not diverge from our professional task and should recognise the relevance of our knowledge. The end of 2014 was frenzied. But the pace has not slowed in 2015. Many are the topics discussed by this Board and many the meetings held already to get things off to a good start. We anticipated a hectic year, a year of change; we are not oblivious to the changes we may face as a society and a country. The profession is alive and well and will experience them first-hand. It could not be otherwise. All the issues we deal with are equally important and deserving of a little thought. And there will be more; this January practically warrants a newsletter a day! Let’s take a look, then.

**Meeting with the Catalan Data Protection Authority**

On 9 January the AAC met with the director of the Catalan Data Protection Authority (APDCAT) to exchange opinions and suggestions regarding the recent passing of the Transparency Act. One of the most obvious features of the new law is the specific need for solid coordination between all the agents involved in its implementation and application. There are many parts to fit together, the result of years with no clear or specific laws. The Law on Archives and Records of Catalonia has itself come under review—at least in regard to Title IV, on access—in order to adapt it to the new Transparency Act. The opinion of the National Document Access, Assessment and Selection Committee has been respected and, we believe, rejuvenated in the new law. Likewise, the presence of archivists on the new Commission to Guarantee Right of Access to Public Information is an acknowledgement of this profession as more than fit to guarantee the law’s application. Records management is also recognised as a basic methodology within public organisations for controlling and making public information available to the general public. All the matters that have led us to judge the Transparency Act favourably were discussed and shared with the Director of the APDCAT. We asked that serious efforts be made to strengthen areas of collaboration, for honesty in the technical recognition of all parties, so that jurists and archivists may work with common purpose. Due protection of personal data should never be seen as an impediment to the exercise of the right of access to public information. The meeting was therefore positive and, at the same time, has opened up a space for collaboration between two organisations once the common aims are highlighted. The APDCAT will at last sign the Universal Declaration on Archives in the coming weeks at our request.

**Photograph Plan of Catalonia**

On 16 January, and changing the subject completely, we attended the official presentation of the Photograph Plan of Catalonia. Our impression of the text and the minister’s explanation was not good. Quite frankly, we think it is convoluted, extraordinarily complex and, as far as we’re concerned, pays little attention to the work archives do in assembling photographic holdings and collections, and conserving and preserving them. The Plan per se recognises the role of archives in these two regards, but merely gives us a pat on the back and offers quantitative recognition. It is incredible that, on the one hand, it admits that of a total of 35 million photographs inventoried throughout Catalonia, 33 million are in archive centres, but on the other that the greatest exponent of ‘national’ dissemination and promotion of this heritage should be a new museum-type centre on the esplanade of museums on Montjuïc in Barcelona. Shouldn’t the fact that 95% of photographic heritage is in archives be reason enough for the new National Photograph Centre to be under the National Archive and not the MNAC? The plan is full of unknowns. Starting with the strange budget. The lion's share, €275,000, is allocated to the creation of a unified national website to publicise existing collections along with the creation of a ‘national collection’. The sum of €50,000 is allocated to the creation of the new National Photograph Centre. And a further €60,000 is allocated to promoting protection and description of Catalan photographic heritage. The latter, it would appear, would be earmarked for the regional archives and the National Archive, and possibly for other unspecified municipal centres, for the assembling of holdings, conservation treatment, cleaning of plates, digitization of negatives, contextual description, and so forth. However, the zero-euro increase in in the ordinary budget of the National Archive of Catalonia for 2015 makes one think that that's not the way of things and the National Archive will play no significant part in this business or, which we think is worse, that the €60,000 are not an extra but instead have to come out of the general amount already assigned, having to give up other archiving tasks for strategic or ‘regional’ reasons to prioritise those relating to photographic heritage. Too many unknowns, too many shady areas and the feeling that once again the Catalan archives are playing a residual part à la Cinderella in the dissemination of Catalan heritage. And we want it all in 2015, an election year. We shall see.

**Digital Government Congress, Barcelona**

On 21 and 22 January we took part in the first Catalan Digital Government Congress. This event revitalised the old e-signatures conferences held up until 2010 and made us miss the *Innovadoc* symposia that the Ministry of Culture organised until 2011 with notable success in terms of attendance and dynamization of the records management sector. The AAC understood it to be a strategic space to make our professionals visible as necessary agents in matters of transparency, access to information, improvement of production systems, process reengineering, certifiable identity, open government, open data, big data ... of all these things. It should be said that behind the concept of Digital Government is a particular way of understanding the world of the new administration and, quite frankly, it does not exactly meet requirements as we, as archivists and records managers, have been doing for years. One of the main conclusions drawn from the congress is that all those concepts we listed above simply form a nebula of good practices, new technologies and experts in many things trying to get organised to solve the problems of organisation and productivity endemic to the public administration. In any case, being there meant that many professionals could meet up again, exchange knowledge with other sectors and, above all, it was seen that in this profession there is something more than just vague ideas or miraculous transparency portals. We will endeavour to continue to be there whenever necessary, because it is in this sphere that the future of our profession is at stake.

**15th Congress of Catalan Archivists**

The Digital Government Congress provided us with the opportunity, on 22 January, to provide those interested with details of the upcoming Archivists’ Congress to be held in Lleida on 28, 29 and 30 May 2015. Under the double slogan ‘Digital Preservation. Permanent Access’ we explained two fundamental aspects: that access to quality, authentic and reliable public information is clearly linked to records management, and that digital preservation is the area of interest that will enable such access to be permanent in the short, medium and long term for digital records. Our vice-president, Vicenç Ruiz, and our research commissioner, Jordi Serra, gave a solid, convincing presentation that attracted the interest of more than a hundred people. The Lleida Congress will be dealing with these and many more issues that we will be hearing about shortly with the publication of the event website. Focusing the need for records management and digital preservation in the Digital Government nebula should have made clear to other professionals that these two areas are closely linked to the expertise of our scientists and professionals. At the same time we, as scientists and professionals, have had to accept the winds of change blowing in from all these areas. We will insist as far as it takes that our digital transition be recognised as a duty to be fulfilled. The first step towards doing so is undoubtedly to take an active part in the Lleida Congress and make the most of both the professional relationships established and the new knowledge we will all undoubtedly acquire. From professionals with close ties to historic archives to records managers working in the production systems of organisations, the problem of digital preservation will affect us all. And permanent access? Well, that goes without saying. Maybe it’s time to drop the expression ‘permanent conservation’ and use our suggestion, which is more proactive, more citizen-oriented, more user-oriented and not so focused on the object. In keeping with post-patrimonial archival science, the aim should not determine our path, but what is important is its contextualisation, its uses, its origin, the purpose it has served and, above all, the purpose it will serve from now on. And so that it can be reused, achieving permanent access must be our ambition as a profession. For all these reasons, because events and new developments are coming along fast and furious, because debate is underway, people are critical and ready for a change, fearlessly shouting out that Catalan archival science is alive and kicking. And we thank you for that. Don’t stop.