

Training for museums and the National Charter for museum professions in Italy: a new prospective for development

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Abstract

Traditionally Italian universities have trained researchers and professionals in conservation: archaeologists, art historians and architects. It is only with the reform of the universities, from 1999, that the teaching of museology and museography have also been expanded.

Italian museums are for the most part public museums, depending on local bodies or the national ministry; they lack autonomy and do not possess specific professional figures. The task of conservation has predominated over the other roles of museums, but with the reform of the conservation law in 2004 the definition of 'museum' has been introduced in Italy as well, and regulations regarding the development of heritage have been issued; in addition the Regions have also taken on a more active role for museums belonging to local bodies and for the development of their territory.

Museum professions are not officially recognised, but the museum community, through the various associations and ICOM Italia, has put together a document to act as a general reference, the National Charter of Museum Professions, which has been followed by the Manual of Museum Professions in Europe.

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Now there is a need to plan the content and outlines of vocational training courses for museum professionals, together with the universities, the regions and the museums themselves, along with the associations and ICOM – ICTOP, utilising the most innovative Master's courses which offer an interdisciplinary approach, a methodology which combines theory and practice, and an element of hands-on experimentation in museums, or with museums.

1. Guidelines of university reform in Europe and in Italy

The present work aims to indicate how secondary postgraduate training courses may have an effective supporting role in accepting the challenges in sectors which are experiencing significant changes. Cultural institutions, and in particular museums, might constitute an example of this: for a long time these were considered as almost extraneous to the socio-economic context and disconnected from the idea of reaching efficiency goals, or objectives of effectiveness or economy (in the same way as other institutions belonging for the most part to the public sector) (Anselmi 2003, Donato 2004). In the last few years, on the other hand, they have found themselves subject to the demand, made in an insistent manner, to be able to bring together into one single direction aims both of an institutional order, such as that of conservation, but also the development of heritage and cultural identity, with goals of an economic order, both in the direction of favouring development in the local area they belong to, and in the search for economy (Bagdadli 1997, Dubini 1999, Sibilio Parri 2004).

In a certain sense this has brought about a revolution in the way in which the professions concerned with the museum world and that of cultural institutions in general are conceived, and this will be analysed more thoroughly in the following pages. This process has, however, developed in parallel with the reform of secondary further education on the European level aimed at creating an "open European space of higher education". Thus, in order to emphasise the possible interrelations between the two changes we have analysed that are presently underway, it seems useful to look in depth first of all at what has occurred in Europe in the subject of reform of secondary further education courses, in particular

examining the path undertaken that has become known as the 'Bologna Process'.

The tendency to harmonise legislation in Europe, most of all between the member states of the European Union, has taken on an ever more important role over the last few years, especially in the fields of the free circulation of goods and workers, of systems of taxation, of regulation of commercial entities and of legislation regarding company balance sheets, of markets and financial intermediaries, and finally of the protection of rights. As mentioned earlier, the reform of secondary further education has taken on a fundamental role, and this has found its apogee in the so-called 'Bologna Process'.

The 'Bologna Process' consists of a series of reforms of university statutes on a European level (that does not regard solely the member states of UE, but rather 46 countries over the whole continent³) which had its beginnings in a meeting that took place in precisely this city between the education ministers of states involved that resulted in the Bologna Declaration of 19th June 1999. The Bologna Declaration witnessed a kind of 'preview' in the Sorbonne Declaration of 1998 (signed by the education ministers of France, Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom)⁴ where the need to create an "open European space for higher education" and the necessity of

³ The countries that have taken part in the Bologna Process from the outset are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom. Gradually others have joined: Albania (from 2003), Andorra (2003), Armenia (from 2005), Azerbaijan (2005), Bosnia-Herzegovina (2003), Croatia (from 2001), Cyprus (2001), Georgia (2005), Macedonia (2003), Moldavia (2005), Montenegro (2007), Russia (2003), Serbia (2003), Turkey (2001), Ukraine (2005) and Vatican City (2003). For more details on the Bologna Process, see: www.processodibologna.it.

⁴ The incipit of this declaration seems to be iconic: "*The European process has made hugely important strides in recent times. The importance of these should not make us forget that Europe is not only that of the Euro of the banks and the economy: it should also be a Europe of the conscience. We must consolidate the intellectual, cultural, social and technical dimensions of our continent, and build upon these. To a great extent these have been shaped by the universities which continue to play a key role in their development.*"

creating a system of recognition for credits at an international level were defined clearly for the first time. With the Bologna Process, besides involving a large number of countries, up to the present 46, and some other international institutions, a great effort was undertaken to achieve the convergence of the university systems of the participating countries leading towards the creation of an open European space for higher education for 2010, or rather, a system founded on the following elements:

- transparency and clarity of training courses and academic qualifications;
- concrete possibility for students and graduates to continue their studies without difficulty, or find an occupation in another European state;
- increased capacity of European higher education to attract citizens from non-European states;
- development of a high-quality supply base of knowledge to ensure the economic and social development of Europe.

It is worth noting that the path developed by the Bologna Process is not based on obligatory initiatives for governments, but on a series of lines of principle to be adopted freely and voluntarily and which the ministers of the participating countries have nevertheless signed up to. In addition, we should also underline the fact that the process does not lay down the objective of harmonisation of higher education systems in the direction of their homogenisation, but, while maintaining their specificity and differences, rather it intends to create a common frame of reference with which they can place themselves.

The Bologna Process is put into effect on three fundamental levels: international, national and institutional. On the international level, in the first place, the ministers of education of participating states meet every two years to evaluate the results obtained, pronounce further policy indications and establish the priorities for the coming two-year period. After the first meeting at Bologna in 1999, the ministers met in Prague in 2001, Berlin in 2003, in Bergen in 2005 and in London in 2007. The next meeting will be held in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve on 28/9 April 2009. Now we shall outline the main results of each of these meetings with the aim of giving a general outline of the tendencies involved.

The main objectives of the declaration signed at Bologna were the adoption of a system of academic qualifications that was understandable and comparable by means of the use of the so-called “Diploma Supplement”, use of a system essentially based on two main cycles (first and second level), the activation of a system of teaching credits, promotion of mobility by removal of obstacles to the full and free circulation of students, researchers and administrative personnel, the development of European cooperation in the assessment of quality and of the European dimension of higher education.

With the Prague Conference new objectives were added, such as the recognition of the need for collaboration between institutions and students in pursuing common goals, affirmation of the social dimension of the Bologna Process, and of the principle according to which the higher education institution is a public good and a public responsibility. The Berlin meeting emphasised recognition of the fundamental role of research in higher education; in line with this assumption it thus becomes necessary to go beyond the two cycles and include a third – the research doctorate – in the process of European convergence. With the Bergen meeting attention was devoted to the state of progress of national reform processes, a system of criteria for quality assessment was adopted and the principle of a European register of national evaluation agencies was accepted.

The meeting held at London in 2007 in part considered the progress made in the preceding years in relation to the main elements of interest to the Bologna Process, while also identifying the elements of strategic development until 2009. In reference to this last point, the centrality of issues linked to the mobility of students and researchers and the social dimension of the process were again underlined: with relation to these aspects the need to improve collection of data, also by developing indicators in collaboration with the European Commission (Eurostat), was recognised; also linked to this area is the strengthening of the action of stocktaking, undertaken after the Bergen meeting connected with the application of the lines of operation of the process. The centrality of issues related to employability for qualifications awarded in the three study cycles (first, second and doctorate) was also forcefully emphasised.

Continuing our look at the international level of the process, between one ministerial conference and another, a centre-stage role

has been played by the so-called “Bologna Follow-up Group” which meets twice a year and is made up of the representatives of all the signatories and the European Commission, in addition to a series of international institutions with a consultative role.⁵ Lastly, every year various seminars are organised, referred to as “Bologna seminars”, in various European venues, with the aim of developing further aspects of the themes associated with the process, examining persisting obstacles and proposing new forms of cooperation.⁶

Moving on to the national level, on the other hand, this involves the participation of the government in each state, and in particular, the minister of tertiary education, the conference of university rectors/deans or similar associations, student organisations and, on occasion, quality assessment agencies, employers’ associations or other significant organisations. Many European countries have activated structural reforms to their tertiary education systems in order to come into compliance with the Bologna objectives, while others are preparing to do the same: in some cases this implies modification of the framework of qualifications and organisation of courses of study, in others the introduction of the European system of credits or assisting the mobility of students or graduates. As far as Italy is concerned, on the legislative level the Bologna process has brought about the introduction of certain fundamental measures that have affected tertiary education in Italy, such as:

⁵ Such institutions are the Council of Europe, the Education International Pan-European Structure), ENQA (European National Quality Assessment Agencies), ESIB (student representation body), EUA (European Universities Association), EURASHE (represents the non-university sector), UNESCO, CEPES and UNICE (confederation of European industry).

⁶ Among these we would like to mention those of Zurich on credit recognition (2002), Helsinki on Master’s diplomas – understood as second level academic qualifications (2003), Mantua on integrated curricula (2003), Oslo on student participation in governance processes (2003), Stockholm on joint degrees (2004), Edinburgh on the role of the same Bologna Follow-up Group (2004), Noordwijk on student and researcher mobility (2004), Riga on the system of recognition of academic qualifications and credits (2005), Copenhagen on qualification frameworks (2005), Paris on the social dimension of the creation of a European area of higher education (2005), Salzburg on doctorate programmes (2005).

- the decree of 3rd November 1999, number 509, “Regulations with laws having reference to the teaching autonomy of universities”, (later modified by the decree of 22nd October 2004, number 270) that established the distinction between degree courses (first level), and specialist degrees (second level) – which then became ‘magistrale’ with the regulations of 2004 – and specialist diplomas and research doctorates, and that enshrined in law the system of university credits and recognised the autonomy of the universities in the formulation of teaching regulations.
- the law of 11th July 2002, number 148 “Ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon” (concerning the recognition of academic qualifications in Europe), that represented a fundamental step in the process initiated at Bologna in that the reciprocal recognition of academic qualifications between European states is the base condition necessary for the creation of a European space for higher education;
- the presidential decree of 21st February 2008, number 64, “Regulations concerning the structure and working of the National Agency for quality assessment in the university and research system (ANVUR)” that laid down the structure and operation of the said agency, with the aim of creating an instrument that is able to promote quality in the national university system by means of evaluation of courses of study, master’s courses and research doctorates.

Going on lastly to consider the institutional level of the Bologna process, we can see that, thanks to the reform of the university system, this involved faculties, departments, individual courses and many other institutional participants with varying priorities. The involvement of these parties, with the purpose of the complete achievement of the process on a national level, seems to be an essential element for the success of the project.

If we analyse overall the path taken by the Bologna process, some basic elements seem to emerge with interest: in the first place there is a strong call, also reiterated by national legislation, for the

ability to develop, both on a national level and in single educational organisations, independent educational courses that are able to answer basic needs. Besides, in many documents connected with the process there is a clear accent on the social importance of educational issues and on the link between a good higher education system and the growth of society. Lastly, it seems opportune to us not to neglect the aspect often reiterated in conferences and documents of quality assurance in education systems, a necessary element for the creation of effective educational courses.

Some of the principles analysed are to a large extent in agreement with those that have led, on an international level in a great part of the western countries, to a process of reform of the public administration (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2000), that has also involved, to a significant extent, agencies that are closely linked to those that are the object of analysis of this paper, or to put it another way, university institutions and cultural organisations that, in Italy and in Europe, are for the most part under direct ownership or control of the public sector. The next section of the paper will deal with and develop these aspects, and it will then go on to analyse in greater detail the present scenario for Italian museums.

2. The link between the reform of the education system and the public sector

From the 1980s, in almost all western countries, including Italy, an important moment of transformation in the public sector took place, the result of a series of legislative initiatives of national governments (Guthrie *et al.* 2005). The most important factors that influenced the course of reform in this area are basically two: first, which was of an internal nature and can be ascribed to the need to involve every section of the public authorities in the task of reforming public finances, which itself was a process undertaken in close connection with the gradual reduction of the welfare state in almost all the western democracies; the second element, which was of an exogenous nature, instead had to do with the increasing demand on the part of the community as a whole for the reduction in waste, for the increase in efficiency and in the supply of services of higher quality in relation to taxes imposed; in some nations, such as Italy, this second element assumed a still greater importance in the face of certain corruption scandals (such as the so-called ‘Tangentopoli’

case of the early 1990s). In all the western states in which public sector reform took place, this was accompanied by the spread, especially among the experts in public administration and economic and management subjects, of the theoretical paradigm of New Public Management (NPM) (Hood, 1991; Osborne & Gaebler, 1993), which, among its basic and characteristic elements tended to consider:

- the use of a culture typical of the world of private commerce for managerial practices rather than that of administrative bureaucracies which had characterised the public sector; this change in perspective, that came to include principles, tools and methods that are typical of company economics, took on the name of “*aziendalizzazione*” (‘becoming like a company’) above all in the Italian context (Anselmi 1993); a direct consequence of this process of *aziendalizzazione* is the idea of placing achievement of economic efficiency, effectiveness (qualitative, quantitative and social) and managerial economy, that can be seen as a kind of virtuous combination of efficiency and effectiveness, at the centre of institutional objectives;
- a clearer call for subsidiarity, both in a vertical and horizontal sense; in the first place, this is linked to delegation and decentralisation of decision-making, with promotion of the autonomy of single bodies in the public administration, especially those most directly in contact with citizens, such as local autonomous authorities or other bodies supplying services directly to the community (as, for example, the universities); with regard to subsidiarity of a horizontal nature, this can also be seen in cooperation with the private sector for the supply of certain types of public service, also promoting where necessary forms of competition within the public sector aimed at achieving the best possible performance in services;
- focus on citizens’ satisfaction, to be considered not as simple undifferentiated users of services, but rather as customers, and so to be approached by means of the achievement of quality in the services

offered; through a careful analysis of their needs, not only when they are expressed, but also when they are hidden;

- the transformation of management and information systems⁷ through the stated recognition of the need to make use of economic-property accounting tools, alongside traditional financial accounting methods as regards the process of producing planning and final expense budgets (Anselmi 2006, Farneti 2004, Pozzoli 2008), and also by means of a wide-scale use of the techniques of performance measurement (Eccles 1991), both with a view to making a contribution to management, and with the aim of making directors more responsible, by linking it to the system of earnings (Kaplan & Norton, 1992).

Having made this description of the management apparatus, it seems opportune to mention how the overall picture of reforms also came to influence the institutional and administrative parts of the public administration in a decisive manner (Borgonovi, 2002), bringing about, in the first place, a reduction in size of elements in the public apparatus (such as ministries, public bodies and agencies); in addition, an internal logic was created that tended to cause various forms of competition to emerge between the various parts of the public administration (as has been observed, for example, as regards Italy in the health and secondary education sectors), just as in the same way the use of juridical forms and contractual practices that are of a private nature has taken on growing importance, especially in the management of relations with third parties.

Public sector reform has in addition taken on certain characteristics that are particular to Italy (Meneguzzo, 1997), and which may be summarised in the following points:

- effective promotion of an innovative role of public management that is different from the past, that guarantees it greater autonomy and responsibility by means of the separation of the functions of direction on the one hand and day-to-

⁷ For the concept of management system see Bertini (1977).

- day management on the other, this second being the primary task of management;
- use of new professional forms in executive management (for example, the title of Director General in local organisations), as also new forms of negotiation and payment, inspired by those already widespread in the private sector; this particular element comes to take on especial significance for sectors such as those of museums and cultural institutions, as we shall see in the following paragraphs;
 - opening up the day-to-day management of public services to private providers, by using outsourcing policies, privatisation or liberalisation of the services themselves; in brief, outsourcing entrusts services or a part of them to external organisations that are usually private, while maintaining direct control over the achievement of the results expected by the public administration; privatisation may instead assume the character of a so-called 'formal' privatisation, for what regards solely the juridical form, which becomes private, while it is referred to as 'substantial' in cases in which it has to do with the actual concession of (majority) stakes or entire companies in public service to private investors; liberalisation, instead, concerns the promoting of a competitive context in which services traditionally expected of the public sector are offered by means of the development of a system in which various producers can present themselves directly to users-customers with their offers (competition in the marketplace) or by carrying out a public competition, the winner of which becomes the possessor of the monopolistic supply in a particular sector/market of public utility (competition for the market).

Now let us return to look at the link between the fundamental points of the reform of the public administration and those of university reform that were mentioned in the first paragraph. Although, indeed, the context of the analyses may be different in some aspects, it is interesting to note how in the transformation in

the higher education system there are to be found some of the fundamental elements of the reform of the public administration: something that if on the one hand it ought not to be a surprising element, in as much as the main institutions that were the subject of higher education reform, or rather those that can be called academic, for the most part constitute part of the public sector, it is nevertheless an element that may stimulate further reflection. First of all, it seems opportune to list briefly what are some of the key elements that are points of convergence between the main lines of the courses of reform that we have examined:

- the promotion of the independence of individual organs involved in the reform process: a picture tends to emerge in which there is a need to emphasise the increase in individual responsibility for one's own results in the fullest manner; reform processes tend to reveal the fundamental guidelines, to illustrate the lines of growth and development, but it is then up to the individual institutional bodies, and, in particular, up to the persons possessing the role of executive director, to know how to bring about the actions that are able to make concrete progress in carrying these lines of development forward;
- the incentive to achieve a performance of quality in eyes of those who benefit from the services delivered; linked to this aspect is the growing call for internal competition, in the context of the same sector, between public institutions, just as competition between areas and local and national contexts; the logic of competition, even if not overemphasised (and bearing in mind the fact that we are dealing for the most part with services in which the ultimate goal is preservation of the collective interest), is seen in this sense as a driving factor towards development and the ability to provide quality services (Donato, 2000);
- the emergence of a dimension of social importance: this regards, more specifically, the situation in which the social effects of the reform policies adopted are considered to be very significant, just as the link between the policy or strategy which is put into

practice and its effects on society itself is considered of primary importance.

The picture outlined very briefly by these three points also takes on a particular value for the organisations that the remaining part of this work will concentrate on: museum institutions. Thus it seems of great interest to go on to analyse the evolution of their legislative and institutional frame of reference, which has gradually developed over the last few years, especially in the Italian context; from such an analysis it is hoped to bring out, in the development of the following two paragraphs, how it is that precisely the capability to train and educate adequate professionals who are able to operate in the renewed landscape with success, is a critical factor for success for museums, in a way that is fitting with the principles of reference that have been analysed.

3. Italian museums and public administration reforms

Italian museums are for the most part public museums. They have been calculated as numbering more than four thousand museums, of which 13% are state museums, 47% are local (belonging to city, provincial and regional authorities), 6% are university museums, 4% belong to various bodies, 13% are ecclesiastical, and only 17% of the total are private in the narrow sense of the term⁸. Until a few years ago, they were conceived of as buildings or organisations for the keeping and conservation of works of art, without their own physiognomy, being absorbed as they were by the system of regulations for care and protection. They did not have independence: state museums were directly under the supervision of the 'Soprintendenze' (government supervisory bodies) – the de-centralised structures of care and protection of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture – and the local museums were regarded as offices which depended directly on the city, provincial or regional authorities. The personnel recruited by open competition as directors of these state institutions were expected to possess, most of all, knowledge in the disciplines relevant to the *soprintendenza* in each sector – subdivided into supervisory bodies for archaeology, historic and artistic heritage, architectural heritage etc – and the same was

⁸ Source: ISTAT census of museums. The ecclesiastical museums depend on the religious authorities, but are subject to Italian state legislation and carry out public functions.

also true for the directors of local museums, where knowledge was required in the fields connected with the typologies prevalent in the museums to be managed. Intermediate roles were poorly defined and were often very different from one authority to another, while the roles of custodianship and security were considered fundamental and had numerous employees (ANMLI, 2000)

The transformations in Italian society from the Nineteen Eighties also had substantial effects on the museums. An increase in the visiting public had the effect of changing the conception of the museum, from a structure for preservation to a location for communication and participation. The flow of visitors, with its connected income, revealed how structures and cultural initiatives can also take on an “economic” importance as factors in the development of the cities and the localities. In addition, demands for independence and decentralisation of the functions of the public administration produced a series of legislative reforms that have had a notable effect on the arrangement and operation of museums (Jallà, 2003)

A brief illustration of the main legislative enactments is useful in outlining the processes of transformation of museums:

- the law 142/1990, *Ordinamento delle autonomie locali* (regulation of local autonomous bodies) confers statutory autonomy and regulatory powers on local bodies, permitting greater freedom in the organisation of offices and personnel; it separates the political function of direction and control from the administrative management and direction of offices; introduces directors with limited term contracts who are responsible for achieving the objectives and programmes of the administration; introduces the possibility to run public services by means of other forms of supply (institution, special private bodies, limited companies, entrusting to external providers etc).
- The legislative decree 443/1992, converted into law 4/1993, known as the Ronchey law, after the proposing minister, tackles organisational and safety problems, and introduces the possibility of instituting the so-called “additional services” in state museums, made up essentially of sales points for catalogues,

reproductions, informational material, restaurant and wardrobe services to be granted in concession to private organisations.

- The legislative decree 29/1993, *Razionalizzazione dell'organizzazione delle amministrazioni pubbliche e revisione della disciplina in materia di pubblico impiego* (Rationalisation in the organisation of state authorities and revision of regulations in public employment), radically transformed the conditions of state employment, making it almost completely comparable to employment in the private sector; (later additions in the decrees 396/1997 and 80/1998).

As a consequence, both state and local authorities may also adopt autonomous management policies for museums, and grant the running of additional services to third parties and privatise state employment.

Later on, in the second half of the Nineteen Nineties, with a new series of legislative provisions that take their name from the proposing minister, Bassanini, brought together in the legislative decree 267/2000, *Testo Unico sull'ordinamento degli Enti Locali* (Single Text on the regulation of Local Organisations), local authorities were given further autonomy in the organisation and running of services.

The effects of this new system of regulation on local museums have been very critical. Indeed, we need to take into account the fact that the transformation processes have coincided with restrictions in public finance. The museums, which were up to then considered as marginal structures, being already weak, with inadequate staff and very limited financial resources, for the most part were not brought up to the new demands and needs of contemporary society, remaining in a chronic situation of difficulty. In various cases they were changed into Institutions with partial autonomy, or into Foundations following a juridical model developed precisely for them (Bellezza & Florian, 1998).

In the majority of cases they remained within the authority they belonged to, with direct management by the organisation, often combined with the outsourcing of user services. Classified as being the same as simple offices of the authority, their structural inadequacies were never overcome, on the contrary, paradoxically

they were absorbed into contexts and sectors that were larger, strongly vertical and hierarchical, and they were even more oppressed by bureaucracy, while the professionalism of their staff was killed off, absorbed as it was within the generic administrative personnel (Visser Travagli, 2004). With this lack of specific recognition of professional museum skills and of the cultural heritage, inadequacies in policies and governance towards personnel were revealed through privatisation of state employment and recourse to outsourcing. Passing to the new system of regulation has rendered the identification and enhancement of value of specific professional roles for museums and cultural services even more complex.

The reform process has had an effect on the Ministry itself (legislative decree 368/1998) which has gained the denomination of *Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività culturali*, (Ministry of Heritage and Culture), broadening its range of competencies also to include the promotion of cultural activities, architectural culture, and contemporary art. In order to give autonomy to state museums of the main Italian historic cities of art, special Supervisory bodies were instituted as Museum Centres of Venice, Florence, Rome and Naples (ministerial decree 11th December 2001). In addition, specific regulations were laid down that permit state museums to be transformed into foundations (ministerial decree 27th November 2001, n.491, law of 6th July 2002, n. 13, article 10). By virtue of these regulations in 2004 the Egyptian Museum of Turin became a foundation.

As far as personnel is concerned, regulations for privatisation of state employment have also been introduced into the apparatus of the ministry, with effects that were less problematic, since the technical body of experts that work in the supervisory bodies is substantially more consolidated and homogenous than that which works in local organisations. For the majority of state museums that are placed within the ministry's administration, the staff structure remains unchanged in the supervisory bodies, that are divided by subject, and are for the most part without specific roles and professional profiles for museums, except for custodians.

The additional strong political demand on the part of the local Autonomous Areas for a greater and substantial decentralisation of powers had as an outcome the reform of the Constitution. In the field of heritage, Constitutional law 3/2001,

Modifiche al titolo V della parte seconda della Costituzione (Modification to Section V of the second part of the Constitution), distinguished between care and enhancing value, a new concept in Italian jurisprudence. The law reserves the duty of care exclusively to the Italian State, which carries this out through the Ministry of Heritage and Culture, and entrusts enhancing value, the promotion and organisation of cultural activities, to State-regional affairs legislation. Laws and regulations directing the increase in value and direct management of increasing value for the museums and heritage belonging to the State apply to the State, while laws and regulations directing the increase in value and direct management of increasing value for the museums and heritage belonging to local bodies apply to the local Autonomous Areas. The law lays down forms of agreement and coordination between the State and the local Autonomous Areas through the regional Directorates of the Ministry, one for each region, these being new roles created for the purpose.

Aside from the complexity of the new system that is designed by the constitutional reform, it is undeniable that for the professions the wide scenario of enhancing the value of heritage, which also includes the exploitation and promotion of museums and the cultural heritage, opens out as an opportunity.

The reform of the law of duty of care was passed in 2004 with the *Codice dei Beni culturali e del paesaggio* (Code of the Cultural Heritage and the Countryside) (legislative decree 42/2004). Here we have to do with a reform of the utmost importance that replaces the legislation passed in 1939, dating back to a very different historical, social and administrative context, and that had remained in force for sixty years, (Cammelli, 2004).⁹

The Code finally, and for the first time in Italian legislation, recognises the museum, and gives it the following definition (article

⁹ To be exact, in 1999, with the legislative decree 490/1999, the *Testo Unico dei Beni Culturali* (single text regarding the cultural heritage) as passed, that only had included in its text the legislative dispositions already in force and had merely brought in the modifications necessary for their formal coordination. The structure of the 1939 legislation remained unchanged and for this reason the decree was judged to be disappointing and ineffective and so was surpassed by the Code now in force. It should be remembered that the Code has had corrections and additional dispositions added in 2006 (legislative decree 157/2006) and in 2008 (legislative decree 63/2008).

101): “*Museum*”, a permanent structure that acquires, catalogues, preserves, orders and displays cultural artefacts for educational and research purposes. Here we have a definition that is in agreement with that of ICOM international, even if there are some limitations: the museum is a structure and not an institution, and does not contemplate the task of study and the goal of pleasure. The non-profit nature of the museum is clearly stated in another subsection of the article (ICOM, 2004).

Besides the regulations regarding the duty of care, protection and conservation, generous space is given over to the enhancement of value of the cultural heritage, defined in article 6 in the following way: *enhancing value consists in the carrying out of the work and regulation of the activities directed at promoting awareness of the cultural heritage and ensuring the best conditions of use and public exploitation of that heritage. This also includes promotion and support of initiatives for the conservation of the cultural heritage.*

With these legislative premises, and with the powers and roles assumed in loco by the regions in the area of valuing heritage, the museum and the cultural heritage escape once and for all from a limited role of conservation and the passive transmission of historical memory and take on an active role of communicating and spreading culture and awareness, becoming important strategic factors of development.

4. The National Charter of Museum Professions and training for museums in Italy

Until the Nineties the problem of identification and recognition of museum professions was noticed only by those working in the field, organised into various professional associations. The profound changes in state administration described above set off processes of privatisation in working conditions, the granting of new forms of independence to museums and the entry of private providers into the running of museum services. In brief, a culture economy was also created in Italy that regarded museums, heritage and cultural activities as economic subjects in which the staff carries out an important role (Cabasino, 2005).

In this new situation all the fragility and inadequacies of the traditional professional roles was revealed – archaeologist, art historian, architect in restoration – all working in the field of cultural

heritage, when having to respond to new objectives and new tasks that were imposed by changes in the cultural, economic and administrative system. In particular, the debate which ensued in the Nineteen Nineties concerning the role of Museum Director and that included bitter polemics, represents in a symbolic way the uncertainties and contradictions relative to both a complete understanding of the functions and purposes of a museum, and an accurate identification of the requirements and professional abilities needed to direct a museum and to work within it. The positions polarised between two opposing proposals:

- the process of making the museum a private company, entrusting it completely to private parties, giving the direction to the *manager* who would have an economic and company background. The reasons inspiring this hypothesis were essentially the search for efficiency and the possibility of generating substantial income from the exploitation of the institutions and cultural events that were appreciated and attended more and more by visitors;
- affirmation of the public role of the museum, with directorship entrusted to the specialist of the collections, identified as the single person able to guarantee the knowledge, correct interpretation and transmission of the values of the heritage. This hypothesis underlined with conviction the democratic and educational nature of the museum, using it to gain cultural and social effect. A slogan that achieved popularity among the museum community declared polemically that the “art historian” could become a manager, while a manager could not become an “art historian”.

The first hypothesis had as a limit the hurried and careless absorption of the museum into a productive company that had to prove itself in the market, changing its logic and organisation. What was not understood was the complexity of the museum, the embedded nature of its institutional functions – such as research into the heritage, conservation of the collections, and communication of awareness of them – and the activities of operation and development – such as running the structure and the offer of activities and services to visitors – that render the place a special institution with

public goals that at the same time has an economic role. The second hypothesis, while certainly reaffirming forcefully the values of heritage, implicitly recognised the need to alter the skills of the specialists to fit with the transformations that had affected the sector with the acquisition of knowledge and abilities in the field of economics and management. To answer the demand for suitable training, numerous postgraduate courses and master's courses in economics and cultural management came in to supply the need. Today, after more than ten years, between *manager* and "art historian" we have passed from conflict to dialogue, and from dialogue to collaboration.

Not only for the position of director, but also for other roles operating in the museum, the lack of a precise definition of the professional profiles that the staff must possess was and is heavily criticised with negative consequences especially for the new professions in the sector of services aimed at visitors, public relations and communications, etc. Indeed to supply the new demand in the cultural labour market, for the most part unregulated, within a context of reduction of public resources, wide recourse has been made to insecure and atypical modes of employment, to part-time employment of workers, to the undervaluing of the skills of the persons employed, thus forcing the level of pay lower (Civita, 2007).

Since 2001 the parameters of reference for professional roles have been contained in the decree regarding quality standards in museums, produced by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture (decree 10th May 2001). In section IV, dedicated to personnel, eleven professional positions are identified, from the director down to support staff, with an indication of specific activities for each, the basic qualifications required, the type of work to be carried out, and modalities of organisation. The regulations are not obligatory, but have the purpose of acting as a reference and guide. Most of all it has been the regions that have set up processes of achieving standards for the accreditation of local museums and certification of their quality, and indicating among the minimum requirements to be followed the permanent presence of a certain number of fundamental professionals, such as for example the director, the curator, head of educational services, safety manager, manager responsible for keeping the collections, outlining a profile for each of these roles and

promoting training and update courses for staff in service and for people aspiring to find work in the museums.¹⁰

In 2005 another step forward was achieved with the *National Charter of Museum Professionals*, a broader and more structured document developed by ICOM Italia together with the permanent conference of the Italian Museum Associations, with substantial involvement on the part of people working in the field. In the Charter, profiles of twenty professional positions are outlined, subdivided into four sectors that are correlated between each other: research, care and management of collections, services and public relations, staging events and safety. Every professional profile is broken down into three parts: responsibilities, sectors and tasks, professional requirements to obtain the post, and mode of employment. The regulations contained in the Charter make reference both to employed staff and to personnel that work under outsourcing arrangements (Garlandini, 2007).

At the centre of the map of the professions is the role of Director who coordinates all the sectors. The requirements for this position are a degree in a discipline relevant to the specific content of the museum, specialised competence in museology, many years' experience in the museum field, and knowledge at least of English. The Director is the guarantor of the activities of the museum towards the authority in charge, towards the scientific community and to the general public. She or he has responsibility for realising the mission and the policy of the museum. Now that the idea of the director-manager has been laid aside once and for all, the proposal is for a person who is a specialist with specific skills in museology, in the widest sense of the Anglo-Saxon term, *Museum Studies*, also understood to include organisational and managerial subjects.

The Charter is not a coercive law, but a suggestive document that is nevertheless gaining importance and is being recognised in an ever-growing number of cases as the most efficient instrument for regulating such a complex subject, and it is under examination for recognition by the regions and the Italian State. The object is that of arriving at the formation in Italy of a technical and

¹⁰ Many regions have identified minimum quality standards for museum personnel, and have put in place training and update courses, based on the skills needed by the responsibilities assigned to them. The regions involved are: Lombardy, Veneto, Emilia-Romagna, Piedmont, Tuscany, Umbria, Marche, Lazio, Sardinia and others.

homogenous body that is qualified for the care, management and enhancement of value of museums and the cultural heritage. The Charter has also been well received outside Italy and has, along with documents from other countries, formed the basis of the publication in 2007 of the *Manual of Museum Professions in Europe*,¹¹ an attempt to compare and equip the museum professionalisms in the states of the European Union to favour mobility and international exchanges in the spirit of the European Qualifications Framework.

Is the system of education and training in Italy sufficient to prepare museum professionals according to the innovative indicators of the standards and of the Charter? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to examine briefly the results of the process of university reform that have redrawn the map of faculties and degree courses since 1999. The traditional faculties of letters and sciences and the faculties of Heritage Conservation have started three-year degree courses with professional vocational aims, even if with controversial results, directed towards job opportunities in the cultural and environmental fields, in technologies for heritage, in tourism and communications etc. Taking advantage of the autonomy granted by the reform, the universities have structured courses by strengthening subjects that were formally marginal and also by introducing new subjects altogether, among these we can mention museology, scientific museology, museum techniques, museum communications, culture economics, marketing etc. and for teaching staff, in many cases professionals from outside the university have been called in, who work in the institutions and in cultural services. Thus it is an opening to new content and new professional contributions, that is now unfortunately threatened by heavy restrictions on public financing of universities.

Following on from these three-year courses there are the two-year specialisations or master's level courses, which are recognised as being of equal value to the four-year degrees

¹¹ The Manual of the Museum Professions in Europe can be downloaded in French, German and English from the website: www.ictop.f2.fhtw-berlin.de under the heading, International Project; the European Qualifications Framework, EQF, the European system of qualifications, was adopted by the European Parliament on 23rd April 2008 in order to render mutually comparable the national systems of qualifications of different countries using a European frame of reference.

available before the reform. In the field of cultural heritage, master's level courses in cultural anthropology and ethnology, history of art, heritage conservation and restoration have been instituted, but there is no master's level course in museology, although equivalent master's level courses in Archiving, library studies and in musicology and heritage do exist. Here we are dealing with a serious gap and a contradiction because with the openings to be found in the three-year degrees there is a corresponding closure in master's courses that prevents a natural development of studies, does not recognise a specific area of research and of teaching for museum subjects and, as a consequence, does not recognise a specific, independent professional field of museology.¹²

Postgraduate training courses, after university reform, consist of research doctorates aimed at preparing young people who want to find employment in the research field, while master's courses are aimed at young people who want to complete their education with the aim of finding professional employment. As mentioned earlier, many master's courses have sprung up in economics, management marketing of culture and of cultural events. We can indicate here as a specific example the master's course at the University of Ferrara, where I work, which is dedicated to museums, *Economics and management of Museums and Cultural Services*, MuSeC. This is the product of cooperation between four faculties: Economics, Letters, Sciences and Architecture, with the collaboration of the faculty of Law, and the National Association of Museums belonging to Local and Institutional bodies, ANMLI. The features that characterise the course are: its interdisciplinary nature, taught courses and seminars by academics and professionals, the interweaving of theory and practice, study and experience in the field on the part of course members. It is an innovative offering for Italy and one that has had success.

Other types of master's courses have also been set up for high-level training in the field of museum education, heritage

¹² It should be observed that museology only appears in the area, 'Scienze dell'antichità, filologico – letterarie e storico – artistiche, nel settore disciplinare L-ART/04 *Museologia e critica artistica e del restauro*' (Classical studies, philological-literary and historical – artistic, in the subject area, L-ART/04 Museology and art and restoration criticism), thus conceived essentially as an auxiliary discipline to history of art, with a predominantly historical character (ministerial decree 4 October 2000).

communications, event planning etc. The choice of first and second level master's courses in Italy today is very wide and runs the risk of being disorientating, because, even if it is innovative and of high quality, it is not linked in a clear way to recognised professional profiles (ECCOM, 2006)

A third route is represented by the specialist schools in archaeology and history of art that were traditionally intended to provide professional training aimed at care and protection of the heritage, in the sense of state care. With the university reform these were abolished, to be replaced by doctorates and master's courses, but in 2001 they were revived (law of 23rd February 2001, n.29) and a recent decree has reformed them (ministerial decree 31st January 2006). In the protection, management and enhancement of value of the heritage sector the schools have reached a total of eight, subdivided by subject areas, and also in this case no school of specialisation in museology has been planned (Annali Bianchi Bandinelli, 2005).

The debate about professions and education and training, in the perspective of the process of enhancing value in tune with article 114 of the Code, was taken up and deepened by the ministerial committee set up in 2006 (ministerial decrees 1st December 2006 and 21st March 2007) with the task of putting together a proposal regarding the minimum levels of quality of the process of enhancing value of heritage and of outlining professional profiles, study programmes and forms of accreditation of persons professionally involved in the enhancement of value of heritage.¹³ The committee completed its work in 2008 and proposals for education and training remained open, as there was an intense debate still continuing between universities, regions and museum associations concerning the development of specialisation courses and high-level training programmes.

¹³ For the exercise of activities for adding value, article 114 of the Code (DL 2/2004) lays down that: *“the ministry, the regions and the other territorial agencies, with the involvement of the universities as well, establish uniform minimum levels of quality in activities of adding value on public heritage and they oversee periodic updates of them [...] The organisations that have responsibility for managing the activities are expected to ensure the levels adopted are respected”*.

Although it is clear that the course of education and training for museum professional must require a master's degree, since the course in museology does not exist, as we have said, in the Italian university system, the acquisition of professional content and skills can only be entrusted to postgraduate, high-level training courses. The possibilities are various and the proposals offered range between:

- dovetailing courses to the specific disciplines relative to the various types of heritage items, with the reformed schools of specialisation – in archaeological, art-historical, demo-ethno-anthropological, scientific and technological, natural and territorial heritage – to be accessible in a streamed way exclusively to those holding degrees in the single master's subjects;
- directly linking the courses to the functions and tasks to be carried out to direct and manage the institutions and places of culture, with centres/schools established for the purpose in a joint process between the ministry of the Universities and research, the ministry of heritage and culture, the regions, the education agencies and the museum associations, to be accessible to degree-holders in every subject that has relevance to museums.

It is for the legislator to give a response, but ICOM – Italia and other museum associations, in correlation with the Curricula Guidelines of ICTOP, maintain that it is necessary to possess, in addition to a specific subject qualification that is considered a prerequisite, an integrated and interdisciplinary education, with experience gained inside museums and cultural services, with a transversal approach to the functions of research, care, conservation management and the communication of heritage. Besides, retraining and continuous education must become habitual practices in order to be able to render the knowledge and skills of staff adequate for changes in society and the continual development of innovation.

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