

## REVIEWS

## We Are All Connected

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In a globalized world, archivists do not have to look very far to learn how colleagues in other nations are grappling with shared archival challenges. We can easily connect through social media and international forums of exchange. Yet at this particular historical moment, the world is also increasingly becoming fractured as geo-political entities change and engage in conflicts with each other, making the world seem to be a more disunified place. As I write this introduction, the world seems to have become further fractured by a pandemic that compels us into individual isolation. Despite tumultuous world events that would cause further rifts, what has become more evident than ever is the extent to which we are all connected and rely on each other as a community of cultural heritage professionals.

In particular, how we connect through the archival literature influences how broadly we are able to share ideas and collectively advance archival practice. Archival scholarship in the West has tendencies to privilege perspectives from the Global North, and primarily English-speaking voices from the United States and Western Europe. The archival community has made strides to be inclusive of international perspectives through conferences, symposia, and literature from beyond the Global North, but in a journal that primarily focuses on the archival scene in the United States, it can be easy to lose sight of the broader archival community with which we are connected.

As reviews editor, a long-term goal of mine has been to expand the reviews section to include reviews of publications in languages other than English. Reviews of non-English publications in *American Archivist* are not unprecedented. For example, the January 1939 issue included both a review of a French report on archives in Belgium and a review of a volume on Danish archives.<sup>1</sup> But including reviews and engaging with scholarship beyond the English-speaking world should be a constant feature of the journal. This issue of *American Archivist*, which includes reviews of publications in Polish and German, is a step in that direction.

Teresa Sromek reviews *Teoria i praktyka archiwistyki USA* by Bartosz Nowożycki, a Polish book on archival theory and practice in the United States. Julius Gerbracht reviews a German volume, *Archive für Literatur. Der Nachlass und seine Ordnungen*, edited by Petra-Maria Dallinger, Georg Hofer, and Bernhard Judex. The latter describes different approaches to curating the personal papers of literary figures (*Nachlässe*), while the former analyzes government archives in the United States, especially NARA, through the lens of Polish archival practice. Both volumes introduce new ideas and interpretations, but as Sromek emphasizes, “There is also value in understanding that the profession on both sides of the Atlantic has more similarities than differences.”

International perspectives are also embodied in reviews of *The Monumental Challenge of Preservation: The Past in a Volatile World*, by Michèle Valerie Cloonan; *Flood in Florence, 1966: A Fifty-Year Retrospective*, edited by Paul Conway and Martha O’Hara Conway; and *Archives*, by Andrew Lison, Marcell Mars, Tomislav Medak, and Rick Prelinger. Sam van Schaik’s review of *The Monumental Challenge of Preservation* discusses the endangered state of our global cultural heritage, and assesses Cloonan’s expansive coverage of the preservation challenges we face. In her review of *Flood in Florence, 1966*, Miriam Centeno looks at the authors’ recounting of the birth of preservation practices at a pivotal moment in the preservation profession, when the global community came together to save cultural materials. *Archives*, which is part of the *In Search of Media* series by the University of Minnesota Press and meson press, seeks to bring together authors from different sides of the Atlantic. As Brian M. Watson’s review makes evident, the volume is bound to elicit strong and varied reactions. These reviews underscore that the three volumes speak to us as an archival community, shared challenges and responsibilities alike.

Four reviews assess recently published volumes that present new and emerging best practices. Amanda Wick analyzes Dennis Meissner’s *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* from a practitioner’s perspective and how it aligns with existing and emerging trends. Laura Uglean Jackson’s edited volume *Reappraisal and Deaccessioning in Archives and Special Collections* is reviewed by Veronica Martzahl, who engages with the book’s case studies as a complement to the Society of American Archivists’s *Guidelines for Reappraisal and Deaccessioning*. Ashley Howdeshell evaluates *The Digital Archives Handbook: A Guide to Creation, Management, and Preservation*, edited by Aaron D. Purcell, as a baseline guide for digital preservation practices. And Helen Wong Smith reviews the volume *Leading and Managing Archives and Manuscripts Programs*, edited by Peter Gottlieb and David W. Carmicheal. Wong Smith takes many lessons away from this book, but also recommends new paths forward for leadership and management in archives.

Since the Web's conception, it has been a technology that connects people across borders. Ed Summers contributes a review essay on two volumes about web archiving: *The Web as History: Using Web Archives to Understand the Past and the Present*, edited by Niels Brügger and Ralph Schroeder; and *History in the Age of Abundance?: How the Web Is Transforming Historical Research*, by Ian Milligan. Both publications interrogate the Web as a site for historical research, though Summers takes this opportunity to ask what it means to archive the Web and how archivists can attune their practices to meet emerging research needs that capture the Web as not only WARC files, but also as a sociotechnical construction.

*American Archivist* is the Society of American Archivists's premier journal, but it is—and should be—a journal for all archivists, regardless of country of origin. And to be an inclusive journal, it requires voices from beyond the Global North. I hope to continue including more reviews that represent the breadth of the international archival literature and connect us all together across boundaries, divides, and borders.

## NOTE

- <sup>1</sup> Herman Kahn and Harold Larson, "Reviews of Books," *American Archivist* 2, no. 1 (1939), 46–68, <https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.2.1.c203372787715898>.

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## Review Essay: What We Talk about When We Talk about Archiving the Web

*The Web as History: Using Web Archives to Understand the Past and the Present.*

Edited by Niels Brügger and Ralph Schroeder. London: UCL Press, 2017. 296 pp.

Softcover, EPUB, and Open Access PDF. Softcover £22.99UK.

Softcover ISBN 978-1-9113-0755-6; EPUB ISBN 978-1-9113-0759-4;

PDF ISBN 978-1-9113-0756-3. Freely available at

<https://ucldigitalpress.co.uk/Book/Article/45/70/0/> and

<https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1542998/>.

*History in the Age of Abundance?: How the Web Is Transforming Historical Research.*

By Ian Milligan. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019. 328 pp.

Softcover and EPUB. \$32.95CAD. Softcover ISBN 978-0-7735-5697-3;

EPUB ISBN 978-0-7735-5822-9.

**W**hat is the Web? Is it the collection of standards, such as hypertext markup language (HTML), hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP), and uniform resource identifiers (URI) that have evolved for the past three decades?