

The different approaches the contributors use to analyze the *Nachlässe* and their specific arrangements is a strength of this anthology. Every contributor articulates distinct views on how literary *Nachlässe* are produced and categorized, and where they fit in the scheme of archives and libraries. However, not every essay will be useful for archivists: some essays directly address scholars who work with literary archives, while contributions by archivists address a public that is particularly interested in the science of archiving. Even if some of the essays provide readers with theoretical ruminations about the character of *Nachlässe*, archivists will still find lots of thought-provoking ideas for their practice—for example, which *Nachlass* are worthy of preserving, how one evaluates them from an archival point of view, and so on. My only criticism concerns the preface: it contains neither a reflection nor a global synthesis of the essays. This would have been useful to highlight the strengths of the volume's interdisciplinary approach. In addition, the summaries in the foreword do not always capture the essence of the essays, despite being quite lengthy. Nevertheless, the authors have treated the topic of literary *Nachlässe* in an excellent way and with creativity, while the editors were successful in integrating original perspectives on the subject. *Archive für Literatur* provides readers with useful ideas about the importance of *Nachlässe* and considerations for archivists working with these materials.

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## NOTE

- <sup>1</sup> For a detailed definition and additional literature, see <https://www.leo-bw.de/themenmodul/sudwestdeutsche-archivalienkunde/besondere-uberlieferungsbereiche/nachlasse>, captured here <https://perma.cc/5MS5-UQG8>. A “*Nachlass*” in the archival sense is the entirety of the documents left by a person's professional and private life. *Der Nachlass* is the singular of the term. *Die Nachlässe* is the plural form of the term.

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## Flood in Florence, 1966: A Fifty-Year Retrospective

Edited by Paul Conway and Martha O'Hara Conway. Ann Arbor: Maize Books, an imprint of Michigan Publishing, 2018. 264 pp. Softcover and Open Access EPUB. Softcover, \$19.99. ISBN 978-16-07854-56-2.  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9310956>.

**P**reservation is a profession born out of chaos, and it has an origin story akin to the mythical stories of the flood. Although it is difficult to foretell the effects of traumatic events such as natural disasters, we can only control how

we respond to such challenges. The 1966 flooding of the Arno River in Florence, Italy, compelled a global response to rescue cultural heritage that was universally valued, and it became a foundational event for restructuring the long-term stewardship of culture in heritage institutions. This is why the publication of *Flood in Florence, 1966: A Fifty-Year Retrospective*, edited by Paul Conway and Martha O'Hara Conway, is such an interesting snapshot of the conservation and preservation profession. The book compiles the symposium proceedings of the quinquagenary anniversary of the flood. The symposium was held on November 3 and 4, 2016, at the University of Michigan campus in Ann Arbor. I have been asked to review the online, open access version published by the University of Michigan Library's imprint Maize Books. It provides a good historical context of the impact of the flood, the development of the profession of preservation and conservation, and the implementation of present best practices and the future challenges in cultural stewardship. This book is an interesting combination of personal memoirs, documentary film and photography, technical work best practices, and philosophical inquiry.

The arc of the story is told through three broad themes spread throughout the book: the retelling of the 1966 historical events and their effect on the evolution of the preservation and conservation profession; the development of the current book and paper conservation practices and disaster preparedness; and the exploration of the future of the profession's ethics and the education of its ranks. For many of us working in the field, the book is a trip down memory lane, allowing us to revisit our heroes, people who we read about, were taught by, or even with whom we had the privilege of sharing our daily work.

The contributors are a variety of preservation professionals who treat the topic from different points of views. It starts with firsthand accounts of the response to the flood from pillars of the profession such as Don Etherington and Sheila Waters. In their chapters, "After Florence: Developments in Conservation Treatment of Books" and "Peter Waters and the Origins of Library Conservation: A Memoir," they both describe a time of eager international volunteerism, where the young people hailed as "Mud Angels" for heroically digging out cultural materials from the Arno's sediment became the first stalwarts of a new vocation. This is a tale of early mistakes, and bold and strategic corrections; the perfect exemplar that necessity is the mother of invention.

Megan Holmes's essay, "The Florence Flood: An Art Historical Perspective," traces how triage protocols, new treatment techniques and materials, as well as new strategies of mass treatments were adopted to deal with the scale of the damage. Julia Miller, in her chapter, "Another Flood? Research and Publishing on Historical Buildings since Florence," worries that much cultural information was lost from original book bindings as homogenized conservation techniques resulting from the mass response dominated the field.

Sherelyn Ogden's essay, "The 1966 Flood in Florence: Changing Concepts of Book Conservation and Ethics," delves into the formation of the "Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice" of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) which, at its core, addresses how much conservation intervention is *enough*. One needs to balance the actual amount of work done on individual items for particular reasons. For example, on one hand, a conservator needs to balance the extent of repairs performed on an object to retain evidence that shows that object's own history and provenance. On the other hand, given the limited resources available after a disaster, a recovery team of conservators has to decide how much work is possible to stabilize each item to be able to treat an entire collection. Ogden describes the practice of phased conservation, which provides cleaning and stabilization to make each item usable, and its evolution to the current practice of preventative preservation, where more comprehensive methods (such as environmental monitoring) are used to minimize the need for remediation due to preventable damage and to ensure better care for collections as a whole.

Sometimes, a picture captures the unmaking of a thousand worlds; in his essay, "The Florence Flood and Its Aftermath: The Photography of Balthazar Korab," John Comazzi illustrates the drama behind the destruction of the iconic photographs taken by Balthazar Korab. Other times, to really grasp the magnitude of the event, an immersive medium such as cinema can capture both the terrible devastation and the inspiring recovery efforts on film. This can be seen in the essay about the Franco Zeffirelli film "*Florence: Days of Destruction*" by Brian Draper and Carla Montori, and in Cathleen Baker's description of the Roger Hill 1968 documentary "*The Restoration of Books, Florence*."

The book also explores current disaster management practices: from Nancy E. Kraft's discussion of dealing firsthand with local disasters, to Jeanne Drewes on the formation of heritage disaster response at the national level, and Doris Hamburg's warning that globally, climate change will only result in more frequent and devastating disasters. Shannon Zachary's essay, "Disaster Preparedness Goes Digital," takes us to a country where no one has gone before (or, where Mud Angels would fear to tread at least) and discusses the need for disaster preparedness in the digital era.

Throughout the publication, multiple authors lament the International Centre for the Preservation of Books and Manuscripts, which never materialized. At the time of the symposium in 2016, the profession was dealing with a disaster of its own; the closing of the book and paper conservation training program at the University of Texas at Austin in 2011. The closing of this program destabilized the career paths of many future conservators and generated much introspection on what it means for the future support of conservation programs. The ripple effects of these concerns are still felt to this day.

Several authors explore educational models on a wide spectrum. In “Whence and Whereto Library and Archives Conservation Education?,” Ellen Cunningham-Kruppa advocates for establishing doctoral degrees for instructors of graduate conservation programs to give them more weight in academia. Cathleen Baker’s essay, “The Future of Library and Archives Conservation Education,” suggests eliminating science prerequisites and adding them into an expanded three-year classroom program to make “conservation education more diverse and more effective” (p. 190). John Dean speaks of his work both nationally and internationally in “Preservation Education through In-Service Training: An International Perspective,” using an apprenticeship structure to provide preservation education through in-service training. Beth Doyle observes in her essay, “From the Master’s Elbow to the Internet: The Changing Nature of the Transmission of Knowledge in Book Conservation,” how the old one-to-one ratio of learning between master and apprentice morphed to the larger-scale production of “Learn one, do one, teach ten” (p. 60). Now, with the availability of online training, Doyle sees the need for “information literacy, partnering with allied organizations, funding, outreach, open access advocacy, and diversity” (p. 61). In “Educating Library and Archives Conservators in Art Conservation Graduate Programs,” Morgan Adams, then an emerging professional, concluded that her education in conservation is a lifelong endeavor: “It has been more than three years since I graduated, and I am still building my treatment experience” (p. 187).

As part of this review, I was asked to assess the e-book platform of this publication for its ease of use. Unlike its predecessor, *Conservation Legacies of the Florence Flood of 1966: Proceedings of the Symposium Commemorating the 40th Anniversary*, edited by Helen Spande (London: Archetype, 2009), this is a freely available, open access text. This online resource includes a DOI link to permanently identify the publication, which is very valuable for future digital scholarship on this subject. However, the site’s reading navigation is confusing and not easy to use. I lost my place several times and had to return to the homepage and the table of contents to find my bearings. I compared this with using the printed version of the book and a Kindle version both on an iPad Kindle Reader and on the desktop computer with the Amazon Cloud Reader. I preferred the printed book, but if I wanted to take notes, only the Amazon Cloud Reader allowed me to highlight text and export notes.<sup>1</sup> In all formats, many of the links listed in the text appeared to be broken.

Michael Suarez reflects in his closing remarks, “Closing Keynote Materiality and Meaning in a Digital World,” on the purposes of all of these concerns: “Preserving cultural heritage, communicating cultural memory, is not about the moldy past; it’s ineluctably about the human future” (p. 222). As the authors concern themselves with issues regarding the past and future of the profession,

I found that of the three sections of the discussion, the essays concentrating on disaster preparedness are the most useful to the average archivist trying to learn about disaster management. The chapters written by Jeanne Drewes and Nancy Kraft in particular provide readers with practical and honest accounts of working on disaster management.

*Flood in Florence, 1966* is essential reading for anybody who has been called to the vocation of cultural stewardship. I surmise that I was selected to review this publication because of my recent advocacy for recovery efforts in Puerto Rico after hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017. What I did not expect is how deeply it explores the makings of a profession and its challenges to improving its workforce's education and diversity. However, I found missing in the symposium an exploration of long-term recovery. For this anniversary, the editors "chose to avoid debate over progress in recovery from the Flood in Florence and cast a wider net on the idea of impact and the implications of the flood for the preservation and conservation professions" (p. 213). A fifty-year retrospective is a good opportunity to show people who have experienced recent disasters what long-term recovery looks like. The choice to avoid the "lack of progress" controversy by the editors missed an opportunity to explore in depth, as the editors mention, how "Loss is the norm" in cultural heritage. Indeed, we start this new decade with an increased awareness and urgency that it is not "if" disasters will strike our hometowns and cultural heritage institutions but "when." We need more pragmatic views on recovery, which can help build resilience for communities that find themselves in lengthy recovery efforts. Hopefully, as the field of preservation and conservation finds new ways to grow into the future, we will not have to wait ten more years until the next anniversary, or until the next big catastrophe, to prepare ourselves for this new reality.

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## NOTE

- <sup>1</sup> The e-book does not provide pagination to cite quotes, so the pagination for all of the quotes in this review has been taken from the print edition.