

was here to see me today and visited Mary also. It seems she and father are very much stirred up over our plans for going to the States. They do not like the idea at all and are feeling badly.

Nevertheless, this is not a world from which men are banished. Most of these women are on good terms with the men in their lives, often choosing to spend their discretionary time in mixed company pursuing common interests. For example, Hannah Richardson, who emigrated at age twenty-seven from Yarmouth County to work in a shoe factory in Lynn, Massachusetts, had a wide circle of female and male friends, including her brother with whom she attended church and temperance lectures, visited mutual friends, and travelled to Boston: "In the evening Than, Joe, Hattie P., Abbey and I went to West Lynn to Abbs uncle's Mr. Elliott's. Spent a very pleasant evening."

One is left amazed at the strength and tenacity of these women, regardless of the period, marital status, or class. When one considers only the physical demands on the nineteenth-century woman, it is difficult to imagine women having the energy to keep a regular journal. Louisa Collins' weekly chores in 1815 included haymaking, churning butter, spinning, reeling, weaving, sewing, cooking, washing, gathering berries, and house-cleaning. Yet, she still found time for three-mile walks, social calls, "rural hops," and "ropery romps." Lest we think that this was just a nineteenth-century phenomenon of the young, we have the fascinating and moving portrait of Laura Kaulback Sleuwhite, grandmother of Margaret Conrad and fifty years a widow by 1936. As a fifty-six-year-old grandmother, Slauenwhite became housekeeper to the Chesley family, which necessitated her cooking, fancy and bread baking, sewing, knitting, and heavy cleaning. Still, there was time for chicken suppers in the Parish Hall, the Woman's Institute, the Rebecca Lodge, and church services. A poor widow and dependent on employers in her waning years, Laura Slauenwhite put the best face on her situation: "I'm doing what is best for all of us" and resolved to enjoy her busy life. Slauenwhite's cheerful observation of her less-than-easy lot is exhibited by most of the women diarists and writers in this collection. Faced with adversity — and there is a great deal of adversity — they make the best of the situation and carry on, guarding their complaints and hurt feelings closely and yet expressing them in these rich but often overlooked sources.

No Place Like Home is a valuable addition to the record of women's activities and thoughts as they span almost two centuries in Nova Scotia. These diary accounts and letters remain a powerful testimony of women's culture and fortitude in Maritime Canada. Moreover, they speak directly to archivists to urge them to preserve more of these unusual and rare sources reflecting private discourse, especially when that discourse is at odds with the mainstream patriarchal voices of the era.

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La Scrittura. Ideologia e rappresentazione. ARMANDO PETRUCCI. Torino: Giulio Einaudi editore s.p.a., Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi 472, 1986. xxv, 190 p. ISBN 88-06-59733-7.

This book is an attempt to reconstruct by means of examples the modes of production and use, the characteristics, and the functions of "displayed writings" from the twelfth century to the present. In the words of the author, a *displayed writing* is any type of writing which is meant to be read at a distance by a great number of persons, that is, a

text written on an exposed surface in a script that is sufficiently large and clear to make evident the verbal or visual message it wants to convey. This category includes inscriptions on public buildings, inscriptions on grave-stones, mural writings (both painted and scratched graffiti), captions of frescos and paintings, writings on objects, prints, gravures and playing cards, books' titles, shops and factory signs, newspapers and advertising graphics, business card writings, school, stadium, and lavatory graffiti, and so on and so forth.

The general aim of this book is to provide an understanding of the social, economic, ideological, and cultural factors which determined the origin, development, and modification of different types of displayed writings. Its specific purpose is twofold: to establish how and why the phenomenon of displayed writing has been dominated over time by single models, such as epigraphic writing, book-hand writing, typographic writing, or advertising writing; and to discover how and when the physical spaces belonging to formal writing and any area containing surfaces which can be written upon have been invaded and occupied by semi-illiterate lower classes, be they the working people of seventeenth-century Rome, or the gangs of youngsters of our times.

The author, Armando Petrucci, has been an archivist and a librarian, and is currently a professor of diplomatics and paleography in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Rome. This work contains the sum of his knowledge as a diplomatist-paleographer and of his professional and human experience, and constitutes an inquiry without precedents, absolutely original and audacious. Petrucci's analysis is deep, sharp, exact, erudite, and at the same time irrespective of disciplinary and geographic boundaries, and founded on some unshakeable convictions around which all his scholarly efforts have revolved over the years. He believes that writing is an instrument of public power; that displayed writing is often the image and mirror of that power; that the use of displayed writing by the lower classes is a conquest; and that the official production of displayed writing is always accompanied by deviant currents. The presence of these beliefs takes Petrucci's inquiry much beyond the historical analysis, and transforms it into a journey through human experience, which involves the reader both intellectually and emotionally.

From these factors derive both the strength and the weakness of Petrucci's book. The strength is undoubtedly in its scientific construct: at the outset, the author formulates his hypotheses, establishes parameters, defines terminology, warns the reader about those elements which can deceive, and explains his methodology. For example, he hypothesizes that every "graphic space" has a *dominus* (master) who determines its use and the characteristics of the graphic products exposed on it, and therefore the ways in which the readers will use those products; he establishes that "programs of graphic exhibition" may concern an entire city or a specific area, but always create coherent and homogeneous products presenting non-equivocal identification signs; he defines the "graphic-monumental ratio" as the relation between a displayed writing and the building or monument on which it appears; he warns against dates added later, dislocations, restorations, colouring, falsifications; and he clarifies the purposes of his work and its focus. Afterwards, Petrucci proceeds to a thorough examination of examples of displayed writings in historical sequence, and discusses them in their broad and specific contexts. The book includes photographs of all the displayed writings analysed in the text.

All along the hypotheses are tested, the parameters and terminology verified and consistently used, the relevant elements carefully analysed, the proposed method rigorously applied, the focus constantly maintained. From a scientific and scholarly point of view, this treatise is impeccable and incredibly rich in content. That is, it is so until the author, with the twelfth chapter, crosses the threshold of his own century. This is the point at which the scholar, with his cold and detached rigour, gives way to the man, with his emotions and beliefs. Here lies the weakness of this book, in the unevenness of tone that the reader feels long before realizing that a shift has taken place, that a treatise on displayed writings has become a monograph on the interplay of social classes in modern society, on the attempts made by the working class, through its historical representatives, to take possession of its own code of signs, autonomous and functional to its purposes, and of an “exposed writing” capable of becoming instrument and arm of political and social propaganda. And, at the same time, here lies the charm of this book and its interest for archivists. Why the charm? Because the reader, who has gone through the first part of this volume at a slow and careful pace, taking notes, returning on his or her steps, comparing and reflecting, studying the illustrations, and trying to memorize the terminology, suddenly finds him or herself totally involved, almost mesmerized by the urgency of the arguments, the rapid unfolding of the narration, the discovery of events so close and familiar and yet so mythical and new. “In the beginning was Russia” is the first symbolic sentence of chapter twelve. Here, the pen falls on the notebook and the incredible journey begins: for three chapters the reader’s own living experience is revived in completely different terms, and he or she can revisit and rediscover it as it appears on the physical surfaces surrounding him or her. The participation of the reader is as complete as his or her awakening is abrupt, at the very last sentence of the book, which arrives like a slap on the face: after an analysis of two superimposed graffiti, the one inscribed by fascists in the thirties and the other by young citizens of the eighties, Petrucci states that they represent “two roads between which, just as between two opposite and extremely distant poles, is contained, in a long bridge, the tragedy of a democracy never realized and therefore cruelly imperfect.” This is a rather emotional conclusion which reveals the ideological nature of Petrucci’s involvement in his discipline, but does not hamper the validity of his scientific findings.

Why are the last chapters the most interesting to archivists? Because the displayed writings they deal with are quite different as to their nature, style, purpose, and location from those discussed in the previous part of the book. They are all substantially political, even when their message is not explicitly such; they are the work of groups, rather than of individuals; and they have a very precise function of communication for action. These writings are completely spontaneous; they are means to very practical and immediate purposes, and are strongly interrelated, often answering each other. For example, among others, Petrucci analyses the graffiti produced by university students between 1968 and 1977 in Rome, Paris, and New York. In those years, the walls of universities, houses, and public buildings — from time immemorial used to listening — began to talk. Elevators and washrooms spoke, and so did the roads, the churches, and every exposed surface. Every city looked like an immense newspaper, a unique edition prepared by amateurs: no direction, no censorship, no official responsibility. These graffiti had a function of political “counter-information” and connected horizontally their authors with the addressees of the messages, without any mediating intervention. Over those graffiti, other graffiti created by political adversaries contributed to the formation of

“palimpsests,” which were often unreadable, but whose visual message was clearly understandable: colours, traits, symbols, and drawings were an integral part of these documents which transformed the cities into living archives.

In conclusion, Petrucci's book is undoubtedly fundamental reading for diplomatists and paleographers, and a very interesting book for historians and archivists also, but for any reader, regardless of profession, background, or interests, it is an unforgettable human experience: for all those who read this book no city will ever be silent again, because all sorts of displayed writings will catch their eyes and tell them their story.

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Records Management Handbook. IRA A. PENN, GAIL PENNIX, ANNE MORDDEL, and KELVIN SMITH. Aldershot, England: Gower Publishing Company Limited, 1989. xii, 249 p. ISBN 0-566-05666-6 \$58.95.

The appearance of a new work on records management, such as Gower Publishing's *Records Management Handbook*, is an opportunity to reflect on the state of the profession as the twentieth century draws to a close. In so reflecting, every records manager interested in his or her continued survival, and every archivist whose collections are fed by a records management programme, needs to carefully consider the following: the *managerial* aspects of the records management function; the *purpose and goals* of the records management function; and the *role and position* of the records manager within the organization.

First, records managers must continually remind themselves that theirs is a *management* function, with all that that implies. All too often, records managers define themselves exclusively in terms of the technical functions they perform, or the specialized tools they employ. Techniques and tools are, of course, important, but unless they are shaped, given meaning, and directed towards articulated goals (in other words, unless they are *managed*), these techniques and tools will be employed to minimal effect. Stated another way, the records manager should be a manager first, and a technician second.

But what does it mean to be a manager in today's environment? Even a cursory glance at current management literature reveals that we are in the midst of a managerial revolution, a revolution with profound implications for the way records and information are managed in large organizations. In theory (and increasingly in practice), one can discern a shift away from hierarchical, rigid organizations to flatter, more flexible, team-oriented approaches; from command-and-control, process-oriented organizations to decentralized structures where authority is widely delegated or shared, and where local personnel are truly empowered; and from compartmentalized bureaucracies, where maintaining the position of the organizational unit is as important as delivering the product, to organizations which act *strategically* and which continually redefine their structure to better concentrate available resources to the task at hand. The implications for records management should be obvious: the tools, techniques, and rationale — indeed the whole approach — of classical records management programmes have sprung from a phase of organizational management which is rapidly being superseded. Unless records managers can adapt to the new environment, they are in danger of becoming irrelevant and, worse, an obstacle to progress.