

**L'archivistique. Son histoire, ses acteurs depuis 1960.** LOUISE GAGNON-ARGUIN. Sainte-Foy: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1992. XX-229 p. ISBN 2-7605-0692-4.

Well known in the Canadian archival community for her contribution to the development of descriptive standards for archives—everyone will recall her *Introduction to Authority Control for Archivists* published by the Bureau of Canadian Archivists in 1989—Louise Gagnon-Arguin, Associate Professor at the École de bibliothéconomie et des sciences de l'information of l'Université de Montréal, presents, with this book, a comprehensive overview of the evolution of the archival profession in Quebec during the last thirty years. The published version of her 1990 doctoral thesis on *L'archivistique au Québec depuis 1960: une profession et une discipline en émergence*, the book is based on an abundant, up-to-date, and multi-disciplinary—administrative, scientific, and professional—literature and on thorough and extensive research in the archival fonds of the Association des archivistes du Québec.

Well-structured and well-written, the book begins with a coherent overview of the contexts—legal, cultural, social, political, economic, and technological—in which the archival milieu has evolved during and since the “Révolution tranquille,” and provides enlightening explanations of the recent history of archival institutions in Québec. The second part of the book asks the existential question: “La profession d'archiviste au Québec, mythe ou réalité?,” and shows the role of the Association des archivistes du Québec in the shaping of the archival profession. The discussion of the mission and professional functions of the archivist, and on the professional standards and code of ethics, should raise interest since they highlight some of the singularities of the archival profession in Quebec. Finally, the third chapter looks at the evolution of the archival discipline in Quebec, providing information and reflecting on the development of archival science, on archival training and education programmes, and on several aspects of archival research.

Louise Gagnon-Arguin provides the archival community with a book that goes far beyond the positivist look at the recent evolution of a professional milieu. Using methodologies and concepts from other disciplines such as sociology, history, and administrative sciences, she has analyzed the various aspects of the profession from a critical perspective. With the assistance of intellectual instruments rather unknown in the archival milieu, she sheds new light on the development of the archival profession in this country. Jacques Mathieu's Preface captures well the true contribution of this book: “Elle donne une vue de recul essentielle pour connaître et comprendre l'essor de l'archivistique au Québec au cours des 30 dernières années. Elle réunit l'information nécessaire pour décrire et contextualiser les événements et les changements survenus dans cette pratique professionnelle. Elle fournit une base de référence pour évaluer la portée de ces transformations. Elle livre une synthèse éclairante sur les tendances majeures de l'archivistique et sur la nature et le sens de son cheminement.” Canadian archivists interested in the development of their profession should read and reflect on this book.

**Jacques Grimard**  
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