

Research in the Archival Multiverse. ANNE J. GILLILAND, SUE McKEMMISH, and ANDREW J. LAU, eds. Clayton, VIC: Monash University Publishing, 2017. viii, 1,064 pp. ISBN 978-1-876924-67-6.

Research in the Archival Multiverse is the first collection of critical and reflective essays produced as part of an ongoing collaborative research initiative funded through grants from the US Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Centred at the University of California–Los Angeles (UCLA) and led by a consortium of academic institutions, the Archival Education and Research Initiative was established in 2008 to encourage curricular and pedagogical innovation within archival studies and to support doctoral research within the archival field. One of the major undertakings of the initiative was to develop the annual week-long summer Archival Education and Research Institute (AERI), which brings together emerging scholars and academic faculty as well as others working in archival education and scholarship. Throughout its first two cycles of IMLS funding, the initiative helped support student attendance at AERIs and committed to nurturing a larger and more diverse cohort of doctoral researchers in the field. Additional IMLS grants have also funded the Emerging Archival Scholars Program (EASP), a recruitment and outreach program that targets undergraduate and graduate students from backgrounds that are under-represented in the field and who are considering doctoral work in archival studies. The EASP provides bursaries and scholarships to assist students to attend AERIs and to support their scholarship throughout the rest of the year. The inaugural AERI was hosted at UCLA in 2009 and has been held in subsequent years at the University of Michigan (2010), Simmons College (2011), UCLA (2012), University of Texas at Austin (2013), University of Pittsburgh (2014), University of Maryland (2015), and Kent State University (2016). In 2017, the University of Toronto became the first institution outside of the United States to host an AERI.

As editors Anne J. Gilliland, Sue McKemish, and Andrew J. Lau note in the preface of their book, potential contributors to *Research in the Archival Multiverse* were identified during the summer AERIs of 2009 to 2012. As a result, the collection includes a cross-section of writing by academic faculty and student researchers covering a broad range of topics, from traditional archival functions to case studies of archival projects to trans-disciplinary theoretical and methodological discussions. Gilliland is Professor and Director of the Archival Studies Specialization in the Department of Information Studies at UCLA and Director of the Archival Education and Research Initiative. Her work focuses on recordkeeping and archival systems in support of human rights, the role of community memory in promoting reconciliation, and digital recordkeeping and archival informatics. Sue McKemish is Associate Dean Graduate Research for the Faculty of Information Technology, Chair of Archival Systems, and Director of the Centre for Organisational

and Social Informatics at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. McKemmish has published extensively on metadata in records and archival systems, Australian Indigenous archives, information resource discovery, and the records continuum. Andrew J. Lau, a former AERI student, is now Program Director for Instructional Content Development, UCLA Extension, and a lecturer at the University of Maryland College of Information Studies. He is also a founder of the *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies*. In total, the volume includes 39 contributors, of which nearly half were student participants.

Research in the Archival Multiverse is an ambitious collection that endeavours to represent the diversity of scholarship that has emerged from within the archival field over the past decade or more. The challenge in putting together a book with this breadth and scope is that it can easily become cumbersome, attempting to pull too many ideas together without coherency. At more than 1,000 pages, it does feel unwieldy, and although the editors have deftly organized the chapters into three categories – theoretical frameworks, applied methods, and case studies – the result is a hefty single volume that might have better served readers as a series of three. Thankfully, the editors offer some discussion in the preface that does well to frame the book around the landscape of archival and recordkeeping research. A helpful figure on page 23 clearly lays out common themes in the field and shows how these have changed over time. The editors then break down AERI research presentations into broad and intersecting themes. The resulting chart paints a clear picture of the multi- and trans-disciplinary work that continues to enrich archival scholarship and demonstrates the extent to which the field of archival studies brushes up against technology studies, the humanities and social sciences, natural sciences, and other professional studies.

Gilliland offers the book's first chapter, "Archival and Recordkeeping Traditions in the Multiverse and their Importance for Researching Situations and Situating Research." The chapter accomplishes two important tasks. First, it traces the history of archival and recordkeeping research traditions since the establishment of the first archival education program in 1777, at the University of Naples, to the recent postmodern paradigm shift that has produced colliding and intersecting ideas about the social functions of archives and recordkeeping. Second, Gilliland provides a lengthy discussion of the archival multiverse, a concept borrowed from Australian Indigenous recordkeeping cultures, to describe a plurality of practices, theories, and thoughts about archiving and memory-keeping that exist within and outside of the Western archival profession. She writes, "One of the least explored aspects of the archival multiverse is the plurality of archival traditions with distinct epistemological, ontological, ideological, practical, even linguistic aspects at work within the contemporary professional archival and recordkeeping landscapes as well as within communities of records that carry out record- and memory-keeping functions

outside professional archival purview” (p. 50). In other words, the archival profession is only one sliver of the vast array of archival and recordkeeping traditions, many of which remain under-studied and under-theorized. Setting up the concept of the archival multiverse is important because it allows for the kinds of discussions and studies that have taken place and continue to unfold in conjunction with the Archives Education and Research Initiative, and which are not necessarily tethered to a narrowly defined archival profession.

Situating research under the rubric of an archival multiverse allows other contributors to the volume to more easily tread into theoretical territory that has not been traditionally associated with the archival field. This approach also makes the volume accessible to both students of archival studies and practitioners interested in new avenues of scholarly research. Frank Upward, for example, builds on Leisa Gibbons’ idea of a “spacetime eddy” and concepts drawn from sociological and scientific relativism to understand the expanding complexity of recordkeeping practices in the era of social media, where the fixity of records is intensely challenged. Jamie A. Lee applies queer theory and the notion of haunting to propose a Queer/ed Archival Methodology that helps explain how histories are constantly in flux, being interpreted and reinterpreted over time. In perhaps the strongest and most important chapter, Anthony W. Dunbar introduces critical race theory (CRT) to archival studies as a way to interrogate and grapple with bias in archival and recordkeeping practices. Additional chapters introduce methodological approaches, such as Jenny Bunn’s entry on grounded theory and Karen F. Gracy’s contribution on using ethnographic methods to study communities of records. Amber L. Cushing reports on the use of a quantitative statistical method for collecting and analyzing data in studies about archival use and user preferences. Other chapters describe case studies of archival and recordkeeping practices in a diversity of settings, from Australian Aboriginal community archives to the Ugandan public service to professional standards development in South Korea.

Research in the Archival Multiverse is dedicated to Allison “Ally” Boucher Krebs (1951–2013), an important member of the AERI community who passed away prior to the completion of this collection. Krebs was a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, a PhD student at the Information School at the University of Washington, and the chair of the Native American Archives Roundtable for the Society of American Archivists (SAA). As Shannon Faulkhead and Kristen Thorpe note in their dedication, Ally Krebs was a passionate, open-hearted, and vibrant researcher, whose engagement with the archival field brought necessary humour to discussions about difficult subjects. Krebs wrote about Indigenous human rights and how Indigenous approaches to recordkeeping both complement and challenge traditional Western knowledge systems. She also spoke of “yarning in the archive” (p. 4), a practice of storytelling with records that respects the various contributors to

the archives, the place of memory-keeping work, and the people who steward records for their communities. Although Krebs did not contribute a full chapter to *Research in the Archival Multiverse*, she is present throughout the entire collection.

Monash University Publishing has just released a free PDF download of *Research in the Archival Multiverse* at www.publishing.monash.edu (see “Open Access Titles”). The electronic version of the book not only facilitates greater dissemination of the material, but it is also a lot easier to carry than the printed text.

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Religion in Secular Archives: Soviet Atheism and Historical Knowledge. SONJA LUEHRMANN. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. xii, 240 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-994362-3.

Archival records can simultaneously be sites of hostility and sympathy and can contain both deep silences and loud polemics. This is particularly the case when one’s research topic is religiosity in the Soviet Union, a state that considered religion antithetical to socialism and was thus bent on controlling religious communities. In her book, Sonja Luehrmann, an associate professor at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, explores the innate hostility of the records creators, and therefore the resultant records, to topics of religiosity. She maps out a methodology for approaching the documents that occupy this interstitial space, emphasizing an awareness of the social life of records – that is, the manner in which documents have been created, organized, kept, and interpreted. While her area of research is religion, this review concentrates on the methodology she outlines and the relevance and implications this study has for archivists. The work has been recognized by the archival profession: it won the Society of American Archivists’ 2016 Waldo Gifford Leland Award for superior writing in the field of archival history, theory, and practice.

The book draws on extensive archival research the author conducted for her PhD in History and Anthropology at the University of Michigan (2009) and for her book on Soviet secularism.¹ Not limiting herself to focusing on relationships between one religious denomination and the Soviet state, Luehrmann examines the state’s interactions with Muslims, Orthodox Christians, Jews, and adherents of indigenous land-based rituals. The

1 Sonja Luehrmann, *Secularism Soviet Style: Teaching Atheism and Religion in a Volga Republic* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011).