


avoidable, since the book builds on the authors' previous publications, which are often much clearer in explaining the terminology and concepts. A list of the terminology they use with a clear reference to the articles in which these were discussed would not only have been helpful, but is indispensable. Another disappointing deficiency, in particular for a scholarly publication, is the poor annotation, the lack of an index and the absence of a comprehensive list of references. Then it would for instance also have been immediately clear that the literature used, with a few exceptions, predominantly dates from before 2015, which is a bit remarkable for such an advanced topic.

To conclude, in terms of content it is a valuable book which should have been given more attention before it was sent to the publishing house. This missed opportunity is likely to have a negative effect on reception and immediate impact of these important ideas among practitioners. Nevertheless, the book deserves to be read and the ideas to be digested and translated into practical solutions.

Notes

1. Luciano Floridi (ed.), *The Onlife Manifesto. Being Human in a Hyperconnected Era*, Springer, Dordrecht and London, 2015, p. 3.
2. Gillian Oliver, Joanne Evans, Barbara Reed and Frank Upward, 'Achieving the Right Balance: Recordkeeping Informatics', Part 1, *IQ: The RIM Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 4, 2009, pp. 18–22; Part 2, *IQ: The RIM Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2010, pp. 42–45; 'Recordkeeping Informatics: Re-figuring a Discipline in Crisis with a Single Minded Approach', *Records Management Journal*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2013, pp. 37–50.
3. Gillian Oliver, Barbara Reed, Frank Upward, and Joanne Evans, 'A Background Paper for a Conversation on a Single-Minded Approach to Recordkeeping Informatics', International Council on Archives Congress, Brisbane, 20–24 August 2012, available at <<http://ica2012.ica.org/files/pdf/Full%20papers%20upload/ica12Final00200.pdf>>, accessed 11 September 2019.

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A history of archival practice, 1st Edition, by Paul Delsalle, translated and revised by Margaret Procter, Routledge, New York, 2017, 246 pages + 27 B/W Illus., AU\$210 (hardback), ISBN:9781317187875

We are all familiar with the paper deluge of the late 20th century, but did you know that in the 18th century there was a similar spike in the creation of paper (vs. parchment) records and that it was caused by the mass uptake of underwear? Or that Jean Nicot, famous for introducing tobacco to France, was keeper of the archives of the French court? These gems (p. 75 and p. 132), and many others besides, can be discovered in *A History of Archival Practice*, Margaret Procter's revised and translated edition of Paul Delsalle's 1998 classic, *Une histoire de l'archivistique*.

As its title indicates, this is *A History of Archival Practice*, rather than a history of archives, and it explores the different ways that archival functions have been performed through history and around the world. Delsalle's motivation for writing the book was to address what he saw as an 'identity crisis of the archival profession' (p. x). Some archivists, he argued, see themselves as keepers of extant, static collections; others work actively with creators to negotiate transfers and then manage those records in custody; while yet others make a distinction between archives and records management (p. xi). Delsalle hoped to settle this argument by delving into the roots of the profession. As Procter puts it in her introduction, the work '[takes] the long view of the value of the archival role' (p. xv).

It is a long view, indeed. The book begins in the ancient world, moving quickly from cave art to clay tablets. The second chapter explores archival practices in the classical world, from the Greek city states to the Roman Empire. The next two chapters are scoped geographically: Asia and Africa; followed by the Americas. The following six chapters cover developments in Europe from the fifth to eighteenth centuries. These chapters intersperse chronological studies with treatments of particular themes, such as buildings and equipment, methods of arrangement, and the lives of medieval archivists. The final seven chapters explore archival practice in the modern age, covering topics such as legislation, the rise of the archives profession, and the development of professional societies and networks.

The joy in reading this book is in encountering archival practices that resurface across the millennia, and that resonate with our work today.

One constant is the need to guarantee the authenticity of records. Seals were first used for this purpose thousands of years ago when clay tablets were the recordkeeping medium (p. 3). In the medieval period, chests with multiple locks were used to regulate access. The different keys would be placed in the charge of separate office bearers to ensure that no single person could alter the archive's contents. Delsalle gives numerous examples of these chests, including a seven lock version made in 1569 in Burgundy (p. 93). In Ancient Greece the archive – or *archeion* – itself had an authenticating function: records of private transactions were deposited into the State repository in order to validate those transactions (like Torrens Title registration in Australia today) (p. 19).

Also, core to archival practice is the arrangement and description of records to support their continuing use. While Delsalle disagrees with Ernst Posner's assertion that twelfth century BCE Ugarit was the first example of arrangement by fonds (p. 4), he does note very early sites like Ebla where records were kept in arrangements that reflected their business use (p. 3). Diverse methods of arrangement and description have been employed through the centuries. One of the strangest examples that Delsalle cites is Pierre de Balma's 1553 inventory that employed biblical and mythical names as codes. The town council's securities and mortgages were filed under 'Judas' (p. 152).

Despite the ostensibly global scope of *A History of Archival Practice*, and although it includes chapters on Asia, Africa, and the Americas, it is dominated by the European experience. From a parochial perspective, Australia gets a very limited treatment: the Records Continuum theory earns a mention while the Australian Series System does not. But it feels unfair to raise this as an objection because it is a fact that Delsalle himself owns: he opens the work describing it as a 'provisional, summary account' (p. ix) and concludes with the hope that others will follow him and fill in these gaps (p. 231).

A more substantial issue with the work is the way that Delsalle's central thesis taints his treatment of different archival practices. Though he professes a motivation to use history to explore the roots of the archival profession, Delsalle's descriptions of recordkeeping cultures are informed by a fixed sense of what qualifies as an archival practice. For example, he concludes that both Egypt and Rome lacked archival cultures because, while they kept

records to support business needs, there isn't evidence to suggest that they stored records for longer term use (p. 8 and p. 21). Delsalle is most comfortable in the abbeys and castles of continental Europe; this is where, for him, real archival practices developed (p. 67). The United Kingdom he is less sure of: 'State concerns about the maintenance of the archives were otherwise limited; records continued to be kept in their place of creation until space forced their storage in dozens of dispersed locations across London' (p. 122). Outside of Europe he is doubtful that many recordkeeping techniques qualify as archival practices: '[t]he nature of archives and archival practice in China, as elsewhere in Africa and Asia, can often pose conceptual difficulties for those familiar with the Western tradition' (p. 33). In his chapter on the Americas, for example, after a lengthy description of the way that the Incan *quipucamayoc* kept detailed records using knotted ropes (or *quipus*), Delsalle concludes that 'it would not be appropriate to call him an archivist' (p. 59).

If Delsalle has doubts about the archival qualities of non-European practices, at least he includes them in his history and then invites others to extend his analysis. Furthermore, his detailed examination of archival practices in European abbeys and castles has, in its own right, much to tell us. He uncovers an uncomfortable truth about archival history: the 'close relationship between archives and authority' (p. 102). Archives were kept in Europe as treasures in the centre of power and were used to uphold that power by tracking feudal dues and by documenting the hereditary claims of monarchs. Until the nineteenth century, throughout Europe access to archives had overwhelmingly been for these administrative, rather than historical research, purposes (p. 144). In France, a whole profession arose – the *feudistes* – who used archives to track feudal dues (p. 139). Procter picks up on this thread in her conclusion, contending that a central motivation for archival management has been to maintain rights and keep them accessible; and, while historically those rights were feudal, now archives are being used for restitution and reconciliation and to restore rights to the powerless (p. 234).

As an English translation, *A History of Archival Practice* cannot be faulted. Not only has Procter cleanly and seamlessly rendered Delsalle's prose into English, but she has brought the work up-to-date (since its 1998 publication) with new material, and has replaced French-language works in the bibliography with English language equivalents where available. If Delsalle invited other scholars to follow him and to extend our knowledge of our profession's historical roots, then Procter has renewed that invitation for an English-speaking audience ... and it would be wonderful if they did.

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Records and Information Management, by Patricia C. Franks, ALA Neal-Schuman, Chicago, 2018, xxiv + 497 pp., 1 online resource, US\$82.00 (paperback), ISBN 978 0 838917 16 9

The 2018 edition of *Records and Information Management* by Patricia Franks is an update of the first edition published in 2013. It is a hefty book of over 460 pages and 14 chapters. The 14 chapters are a useful design tool for a textbook as they could provide weekly readings for