

or against established repositories' (p. 177). I think the methodology can also offer the same to archivists in thinking broadly about gendered ideologies in archival institutions collecting policies and practices.

A theme that emerged through the case studies in *Unarrested Archives* is the relationships between the author, the archivist and/or custodian of the material and the researcher who works on the material archive. The differences involved with working on materials of people who are living, as opposed to those who are dead, are seen across all of the case studies. Most vividly this is encountered in relation to Morra being granted access to parts of M NourbeSe Philip's papers. Morra writes: 'After spending some time in an office rented in Toronto for the purpose of looking through her private boxes of papers, I appreciated the full gravity of what I had asked to examine' (p. 157).

*Unarrested Archives* was finalist for the 2014 Gabrielle Roy Prize (English), awarded by the Association for Canadian and Québec Literatures, and it is the work of an academic scholar. It provides a detailed analysis of women's creative work in specific archives. It is an important reminder of how the material traces which are preserved and the perceived value of them are mediated by historically and culturally specific notions of race, sexuality, class and gender.

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**Preserving our heritage: perspectives from antiquity to the digital age**, edited by Michele Valerie Cloonan, London, Facet, 2015, 702 pp., GBP £69.95, ISBN 978 1 856049 46 7

*Now, go, write it down on a tablet, and inscribe it in a record, that it may be with them for future days, a witness forever. (Isaiah 30:8)*

Carving out a line between academic tome and coffee-table book for those who love preservation, this publication is a collection of texts covering many perspectives on preservation from the worlds of archives, museums and libraries. For the student or professional working in any of these fields, this book presents readings that will stimulate discussion and thinking about concepts and new areas in the professions. For the casual reader, there is much to be gleaned broadly without the barriers of many academic works.

At over 700 densely packed pages, it appears a daunting mission to read (and, given its size, almost impossible to peruse without a table to rest it on), however the structure of the book is such that it is easy to dip into it for a paper on a wide range of preservation-related topics, or to locate specific content. Each chapter is preceded by a summary, which is a useful précis of the subject matter within.

The opening chapter, 'Early Perspectives on Preservation', contains excerpts from famous and also lesser known works dating from around 630 BC (such as the biblical passage above) to the comparatively modern 1800s. These early writings on the topic of preservation and longevity of information give both the scholar and the curious a clear insight into the beginnings and also the reasons for the professional practice of preservation.

The next chapters delve into more specific topics, and many of the sections are taken from conference papers presented within the past 20 years, providing contemporary academic works that are also fairly accessible. This book is not a set of procedures on how to perform preservation work, but instead discusses questions at the heart of this industry – what are we preserving and why?

There are chapters on relatively new areas of discourse in preservation such as sustainability, and the paper titled ‘Sustainability: A Review’ speaks to the main themes in the area – environmental, economic and social sustainability – relating these three back to the work of cultural heritage organisations.

The chapter on ‘Frameworks for Digital Preservation’ is the second largest in the book, which is perhaps not surprising given the volume of work that has been published on digital preservation in recent years, including an updated version of Jeff Rothenberg’s memorable article for *Scientific American* (originally published in 1995). It is worth noting that the most recent article in this section is from 2008, but the papers included have not been selected for their immediacy (an impossible task given the pace at which the field moves), but for the perspectives they bring to the subject. Margaret Hedstrom’s 1991 article ‘Understanding Electronic Incunabula’ is a fascinating work that is some of the earliest discourse on digital preservation, and her observation that electronic records ‘may challenge basic archival theory and practice’ (pp. 261–265) seems incredibly prescient 25 years later. The chapter on collections includes a paper by Karen Gracy on the preservation of time-based media, which could be equally at home in the digital section, but demonstrates that reading outside of what might be one’s usual area can bring not only better understanding of specifics, but also how this relates to the profession as a whole.

While the book does not pretend to go into depth on any one area within the field of preservation, it makes up for this with the breadth of areas covered. For someone with a specialisation in a particular part of the profession, it provides excellent coverage of other areas.

The book also presents a timeline of notable events in the history of preservation. This is given to provide context to papers, but is engaging on its own, covering milestones ranging from the development of bleach for use on fabric, to the 1851 suggestion to make use of microphotography for document preservation, to 101 years later in 1952 and IBM’s introduction of the first commercially available scientific computer. While the impact of each of these events is obvious to the fields of preservation, placing them together in this way demonstrates how broad an area the profession covers.

The editor, Michele Cloonan, has used several criteria in selecting articles for inclusion, one of which is that papers should be ‘from a variety of fields that are primarily concerned with the preservation of cultural heritage’ (p. xvii). Her reasoning for this is that sometimes the thought and practice in one field may be more advanced than in others, and often professionals in preservation-related industries do not step outside their specific area of employment. This reminder that people in the worlds of archives, museums and libraries have much in common and can learn from each other is particularly relevant in times of budgetary constraints.

A thoroughly enjoyable book that I only wish came in a size convenient for more casual reading situations.

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