

The CSMC "Manuscripts and Archives" Conference

19-22 November, 2014

Abstracts

Prof. Dr. Alberto **Camplani**, University of Rome

"Setting a Bishopric / Arranging an Archive': Traces of Archival Activity in the Diocese of Alexandria and other Cities of Late-Antique Egypt and Syria"

After a brief presentation of the issue of episcopal archives in Late Antiquity, including the usefulness of the distinction between libraries and archives, the paper will offer a synthesis of the information that we can obtain from both literary sources and documentary papyri about the multiplicity of functions church archives were able to assume in the life, the organization, and the self-representation of ancient dioceses, taking into consideration what we know about the people involved in their activities. The research will focus in particular on the traces of archival organization in the bishopric of Alexandria and other eastern cities which are detectable in late-antique ecclesiastical historiography and in local chronicles.

Prof. Dr. Joe **Dennis**, University of Wisconsin

"Archival Structures and Practices in Ming (1368-1644) and Qing China (1644-1911)"

This presentation will examine archival structures and practices in Ming (1368-1644) and Qing China (1644-1911). The focus will be on local government offices, schools, and libraries, their links to central government organizations and archival practices, and the ways in which structures and practices were affected by historical and social constellations. Particular attention will be paid to the various types of objects and texts, whether in manuscript, printed, or inscribed form, that local governments collected, stored, circulated, and used in performances.

Prof. Dr. Gianfranco **Fiaccadori**, University of Milan

"Archives in Ethiopia and Eritrea: from Antiquity to Early Modern: A Historical Survey"

Within the proposed framework of the conference, i.e. a historical, systematic and comparative perspective, the present paper will address a few pivotal questions concerning archives in Ethiopia and Eritrea: namely, their origins, to be traced to pre-Aksumite times by way of comparison with the coeval Graeco-Roman (mainly Egyptian) and Near Eastern practices, as also attested in the new South Arabian evidence; their developments, to be followed up to the early modern period through the medieval "dark ages"; their relationships, in terms of production (legal and material) and storing of documents, to the local manuscript culture and the interlinked library system.

Prof. Dr. Jean-Luc **Fournet**, EPHE, Paris

"Archives and Libraries in Greco-Roman Egypt"

Owing to the mass of its documentation, Egypt gives many examples of discoveries of documentary and literary papyri. The papyrologists traditionally speak of "archives" for documentary texts and "libraries" for literary texts, polarity which reflects the two fundamental branches of papyrology (documentary papyrology and literary papyrology). But is it epistemologically correct? Does this reflect reality? The situation is actually less clear: many ancient sets combined both documents and books. I will try to show examples of these combinations and expose the reasons that make them so difficult to detect, to the detriment of our understanding of papyrology and ancient culture in general.

Prof. Dr. Markus **Friedrich**, University of Hamburg

"How European Culture Became Archival. The History and Relevance of Organized Record-Keeping in the Latin West"

This paper will first examine key episodes in Europe's development towards an archive-based culture. It will start in the Middle Ages, address the critical developments from the 14th century onwards and highlight the growing sophistication of early modern archival institutions until it reaches more contemporary periods. A second part will investigate some of the concepts, metaphors, and basic assumptions that became associated with archives in Europe – the archive as a storing-house, a treasure, an arsenal etc. A third part will then address some of the complications, mal-functioning, and counterproductive developments triggered by a growing archivalization of Europe's culture. In doing so it will provide a more nuanced understanding of the merits and shortcomings of European archives which – hopefully – can provide a helpful background for the conference's more specialized discussion of non-European related phenomena.

Prof. Dr. Jörg **Gengnagel**, University of Heidelberg

"Manuscripts and Documents at the Court in Jaipur (Rajasthan) between the Archives and the Museum"

The study of the court ritual in Jaipur has to deal with a variety of documents preserved both at state archives, libraries and archives of the royal family and private collections. In this presentation I will mainly focus on the court protocol that has been transferred from Jaipur to the Rajasthan State Archives in Bikaner and documents that still form part of the collections of the royal family of Jaipur and are now administered by the Trust of the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum at the City Palace of Jaipur.

Dr. Thomas **Graumann**, University of Cambridge

"Documents and Acts in Early Christian Church Councils"

Over a three-year period, between 448 and 451 CE, a major conflict over "Orthodoxy" played itself out in Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon. A series of interrelated meetings of churchmen and imperial functionaries, in synods and before imperial commissions, tried to settle the dispute. All meetings produced detailed written records of their own and repeatedly revisited and scrutinized the records left behind by those that had gone before. In trying to assess their authority and reliability, the protagonists enquired into the character and physical appearance of the documents and acts before them, and recorded information on the keeping and provenance of certain texts. In the process, traces of the operations of ecclesiastical record keeping and archives, and their relationship with the practices of imperial bodies and officials come to light. The presentation follows these vestiges and discusses their significance for the study of textual habits in the Early Church and the later Roman Empire.

Prof. Dr. Michael **Grünbart**, University of Münster

"Securing, Preserving and Displaying Written Documents in Byzantium"

Although the Byzantine millennium is judged a period of maintaining a sufficient administration and a sophisticated tax-system, almost nothing is known about the organization and design of archives and libraries, where all kinds of lists, files and documents were stored and preserved. Availability of information, for instance, was essential for the imperial government in order to control the distribution of goods, to make decisions or to prepare for diplomatic actions. Researchers focused on preserved manuscripts and tried to reconstruct especially monastic libraries and book collections of scholars, but the need and process of securing and providing information is a rather neglected topic. In this presentation I will give an overview on buildings preserving written records (quasi keeping the society's memory), search for traces of storing/stored documents, analyse strategies of securing written records and include the cultural context.

Prof. Dr. Fredrik Norland **Hagen**, University of Copenhagen

"Archives in Ancient Egypt: Forms, Purpose and Usage".

The paper will provide an introduction to the sources for ancient Egyptian archives and archival practices in the pre-Greco-Roman periods, with a special focus on the New Kingdom (c. 1500-1000 BC). The material is fragmentary and under-utilized in historical studies, but provides a useful correction to the 'propagandistic' history of the Egyptian civilization as presented in its official, often monumental, discourse. The methodological challenges of working with ancient Egyptian archives will be explored through a couple of key case studies.

Michael **Jamentz**, Kyoto University

"Archives in Japan: The Legacy of Houses and Hierarchies"

Today in Japan, archives called *kôbunshokan* 公文書館 (public document hall), modeled on Western institutions, and sometimes even called *âkaibusu*, exist, but they are, of course, of recent vintage. However, from its earliest history, Japan has been ruled by a bureaucratic state based on written legal codes (*ritsuryô* 律令) created in imitation of continental models. The creation, maintenance, and preservation of documents was an integral part of government operations; testifying to this fact are the over 300,000 wooden-slat records (*mokkan* 木簡) from the 7th and 8th century that have been excavated from ancient capitals and related archaeological sites. Most of these earliest records reveal the day-to-day workings of the government (receipt of taxes etc) but a few contain poetry in Chinese and Japanese. [It is unclear whether there was a distinction between archive and a library at this early stage.] With the shift to paper and the maturing of government institutions, record keeping and state sponsorship of literary production increased. An extensive apparatus for the creation and storage of these written efforts was maintained by the state. The state also promoted Buddhism, a religion whose teachings fill many thousands of manuscript scrolls (books) and that encourages the copying of its sacred scripture. The early state maintained scriptoria and strove to disseminate Buddhist scripture to the provinces.

As the power of the ancient bureaucratic state faded, a more fundamental social structure, the house (*ie* 家), came to the fore, serving as the central organizing principle of Japanese society and creator and preserver of the written word for a thousand years. At the core of the ancient state was the national house (*kokka* 國家 or *kôke* 公家, i.e. imperial house), which nominally controlled all governmental institutions. This institution, which seldom ruled, survives (in altered form today) and still maintains its auxiliary archival functions and library. (Today's national government also maintains an extensive system of libraries, institutes, and archives, whose roots can be traced back to ancient institutions.)

In classical, medieval, and early modern times, the variety of houses producing and preserving documents expanded. The houses of temples and monasteries (*jike* 寺家 and *inge* 院家), of warriors (*buke* 武家), and of commercial interests (*shôka* 商家), flourished over the centuries and all maintained officials to create and preserve documents. Japanese historians have recognized that the maintenance of bureaucratic (clerical) arm was a fundamental characteristic of centres of power in Japan. The documents produced by these offices may have been wholly practical, but the prestige conferred by the ownership of prized literary works, which would generally be stored separately, meant that these institutions also sought to obtain manuscripts of literary or other classics.

There has always been a hierarchy among and within these houses. Access to their records and "family" treasures were, and are, often strictly controlled. Outsiders or lower-ranking individuals within the house have little chance of viewing their collections. From ancient times, it was often only on the occasion of an imperial visit that the seals on the doors of such institutions were broken. An example of the "closed" nature of such institutions is seen today at the Shôsô-in, an imperial storehouse whose collection is centred on the personal possessions of an 8th century emperor and empress, but which also contains over 10,000 ancient government records, literary works and Buddhist scripture. Fortunately, most of these works have been published, but access to the collection is severely restricted. The tension between the demands of preservation and scholarly access can be felt in all such archival institutions in Japan. Temples, as private institutions (particularly those whose tradition is considered esoteric), tend to provide extremely limited access (e.g. Daigoji whose collection of 70,000 plus works of scripture, documents, and literature was recently designated a National Treasure is notoriously parsimonious in sharing access to items in its possession), but even public institutions tend to err on the side of caution. The traditions that bolster limiting access to elites and esoterization of knowledge linger in Japan and make scholarly use of archival records unduly difficult.

Gregory **Kourilsky**, University of Bristol &
Patrice **Ladwig**, MPI für ethnologische Forschung, Halle

“From Monastic Repository to Museum and Digital Archive: Transformations of Forms of Usage and Storage in Thai-Lao Buddhist Manuscript Culture”

In the Theravada Buddhist cultures of Southeast Asia, manuscripts have for centuries been the only way for fixing complex systems of knowledge in written form. In Thailand and Laos, local histories, chronicles, literature, and moreover ritual, legal and medical manuals were often composed or compiled by monks and knowledgeable laypeople, and mainly stored in temple libraries. However, modern printing techniques, political changes and secularization processes have changed the value, and concomitantly, their contexts of storage and classification.

Although the difference between archive and library is only of limited value when applied to Thai and Lao manuscript cultures of the past, this presentation explores these transformations with perspectives derived from Nicolas Dirks' call for treating the archive as an 'ethnographic space' and Ann Stoler's call for a "move from archive-as-source to archive-as-subject". This presentation will approach the ethnography of the archive-as-subject from various interrelated perspectives: it analyzes historical and contemporary contexts regarding the use and forms of storage of manuscripts (storage in cases, cabinets or by scaffolding) by Thai and Lao monks and laypeople as repositories of religious, ritual and simultaneously practical knowledge, and as objects endowed with sacred qualities. It will then discuss current monastic 'libraries', which are in fact more repositories in a sense that these are primarily meant to store manuscripts while practical considerations such as classifications and inventories are largely absent. Connected to this is the present tendency to establish monastic museums built within temple precincts where manuscript collections are not only kept but displayed as objects of sacredness, functioning more like relic shrines than libraries or archives. Here, the question if storing is actually a way of preserving will also critically discussed: What does "preservation" mean in a context in which they are hardly used anymore?

A final point will relate to digitized manuscripts in online archives and their use in the research process, as mainly practiced by a rather small group of philologists, historians and anthropologists. This latter group, together with various local and international stakeholders, has developed new forms of classification and accessibility as exemplified by several projects in Peninsular Southeast Asia. As this modern form of storage and classification is probably closest to various definitions of the archive, the paper argues that these transformations can actually be conceptualized as a development from temple library to archive under the conditions of modernity. The life of Thai and Lao manuscripts is now prolonged in a musealized state and they are only temporarily 'brought to life' through the extraction process of the researcher. This stands in contrast with their traditional use as containers of practical, literary and sacred knowledge.

Dr. Cécile **Michel**, CNRS

“Constitution, Contents, Filing and Use of Private Archives: The Case of the Old Assyrian Archives”

The archives of the ancient Near East do not correspond to a collection of cuneiform tablets preserved for their historical value, but more to a set of texts kept together in a same place, concerning the same persons, or dealing with the same topics. They have been accumulated as long as they were considered as useful. Beside official archives from large organizations (palaces and temples), many private archives have been excavated; they belonged to individuals and were found in their houses. Among these, the Assyrian merchants' archives, unearthed at Kültepe, ancient Kaneš, in central Anatolia, represent the first important group of cuneiform private archives: they date back mainly to the 19th century BC. These archives were made of letters, legal texts and memoranda. They were arranged on shelves or organized inside labelled containers; such a classification gives hints on the use merchants could make of their archives.

Christian **Müller**, CNRS

“Judicial Archives in Islam: From *diwān al-qāḍī* to Ottoman Court Registers.”

The presumed absence of court archives in the Islamic World before 16th-century Ottoman court registers is a truism that needs reconsideration. In my talk, I will address the topic from two angles: 1) What does “court archive” signify from an Islamic law perspective on the legal validity of documents? 2) Which kind of *qāḍī*-documents survived, and how were they kept? Since 2009, the ERC-project “Islamic Law Materialized” constituted a corpus of nearly 2400 authentic Arabic legal documents from 8th to 16th centuries (CALD). A detailed analysis of this source material provides new insights into the evolution of judicial practices and the judge's role to guarantee subjective rights. A document's provenance from either archeological findings, libraries or archives, may inform about immediate or long-term uses. To complete the analytical approach and fully understand these sources from a long-term archival perspective, I draw on references to the judge's archive (*diwān al-qāḍī*) in legal literature.

Prof. Dr. Charles **Ramble**, EPHE, Paris

“Archival Research in the Tibeto-Himalayan Borderlands: the State of the Question”

Archival investigations have not yet played much part in the historical study of Tibet. This is due in part to the unavailability of such sources: in Tibet itself millions of documents were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, and the large number that do remain are inaccessible to all but a few authorised Chinese researchers. However, significant collections have been preserved in areas of Tibetan culture outside the PRC, and research on this material is beginning to shed an important light on the social history of the societies in question. An area that has yielded particularly important archival collections is the former Tibetan kingdom of Mustang, now a district of Nepal. This presentation will assess the current state of research on this large and diverse corpus of material. Following a brief description of the physical and codicological aspects of these documents, it will assess their significance for our understanding of areas of social life such as taxation, natural resource use, law and conflict resolution.

Dr. Dietmar **Schenk**, Universität der Künste, Berlin

“Archives, Archival Records and Archival Thinking: Considerations from an Archivist’s Point of View”

As a result of the “archival turn”, questions around archives have received a lot of attention. But whereas the word “archive” is ubiquitous, its usage is rather arbitrary. In this situation, we might do well to go back to the roots. Thus, I will examine the traditional archival terminology. In a case study, I will concentrate on the German “Archivkunde”. What is that archivists have called an “archive”? What kind of records are “archival” in their eyes, and what are not? After these questions have been settled, it will be evident that a certain mode of “archival thinking” has been shaped by the specific structure of administrative repositories in the Central European past. Nevertheless, it might be applied to similar contexts.

Prof. Dr. Gary **Urton**, Harvard University

"Archives of Knotted Strings in Ancient Peru: Administrative and Historical Accounting in the Inka *kipu*"

The principal record keeping instrument used in the Inka empire -- the largest state of the ancient New World -- was the *kipu* (or *quipu*; Quecha, "knot"). These were knotted-string devices made of spun and plied cotton or camelid (llama, alpaca) fibers that were knotted in complex ways to sign numerical values in the Quechua base-10 numeral system. The identities of objects (e.g., names, statuses, etc.) recorded in *kipus* were signed by colors as well as by differences in construction features (e.g., spin/ply, knotting and attachments directions). This talk provides an overview of what is known to date concerning the use and storage -- i.e., "archiving" -- of *kipus* from archaeological sites along the coasts of Peru and Chile. The central question addressed is: What evidence do we find in *kipu* collections from archaeological sites around the former territory of the Inka empire that gives us insights into the production, use and performance practices associated with *kipu* archives?

Dr. Olivier **Venture**, EPHE, Paris

“Can Shang Oracle Bone Inscriptions from the End of the Second Millennium BCE Be Considered as Archives?”

Oracle bone inscriptions were produced by Shang royal diviners during about 200 years, from the middle of the thirteenth century BCE. More than 100 000 inscribed fragments were excavated from the last Shang capital at Anyang. Relying on their understanding of the content of those inscriptions and on the archaeological context, some scholars have proposed to identify those inscriptions as part of Shang divinatory archives in connection with an administrative management of the mantic procedure. But a more careful analyse of those elements leads to more complex conclusions dealing with the definition of the term “archives”.