

A climate of change in the education of German archivists?

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In a global world interrelationships within scientific communities are an essential need. Research findings should be accessible all around the world, especially in a small community of professionals, such as the archival community. Researchers should take part in international debates, thereby showing openness towards new ideas and readiness to share policies and theories with other archivists. The German archival community is large enough to discuss challenges within our profession with good results. Therefore, German archivists are less used to sharing their knowledge. If they did so, however, this would benefit not only them but also the international archival community. In order to encourage participation in international debates and networks, changes to archival training programmes are necessary. Results of international debates need to be integrated into study programmes to a higher degree than they currently are. During this talk, I will present the state of the art of German archives with regard to appraisal and digital records keeping, and discuss the participation of German archivists in international debates on these two issues. German participation will then be compared to that of Dutch archivists. Finally, I shall look at challenges to education following my findings and point out possible solutions. I will begin with a shocking finding: Twenty five years after Hans Booms first published his documentation plan in an international journal¹, German archivists do still not play a significant role in the international debate on appraisal. The recently developed German theories such as horizontal and vertical appraisal and the documentation profile are not reviewed in the international debate. The first paper on horizontal and vertical appraisal was published in 2005² in an international journal, but as far as I know international archivists have not yet reviewed this model, which is similar to macro-appraisal. Another plan for appraisal called documentation profile was developed by archivists from municipal archives based on Booms theory. It was never published in an international journal. A further example of a German documentation tradition, which never received recognition during the current

¹ Hans Booms, Überlieferungsbildung: Keeping Archives as a Social and Political Activity, *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991/1992) pp. 25–33 and Hans Booms, Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage: Issues in the Appraisal of Archival Sources, *Archivaria* 24 (Summer 1987) pp. 69-107.

² Robert Kretzschmar, Archival Appraisal in Germany: A Decade of Theory, Strategies and Practices, *Archival Science* (2005) 5, pp. 219-238.

discussion on appraisal, would be the equal value of social memory and administrative records in municipal archives. As you know, a lot of German towns were destroyed during the Second World War. Often archives were destroyed too. This happened in Heilbronn, a town in the south of Germany, which lost 80 per cent of its archives.³ After the town had been rebuilt archivists in Heilbronn began to collect archival material from the cities inhabitants to substitute the lost archival material. Most municipal archives in Germany followed this model. Initially archivists collected newspapers, leaflets, posters, private archives and other archival material. Years later, they began to collect interviews from oral history projects. Nowadays, most German municipal archives hold such a collection, which is called a collection of contemporary history papers (Zeitgeschichtliche Sammlung). However, no German archivist published his findings in this field in an international journal. I strongly believe that the international debate on appraisal concerning social memory would benefit from implementing this collection tradition.

In contrast Dutch archivists published the PIVOT model in international journals and internationally reviewed books.⁴ It is known in the international debate and is often cited, even nowadays. The plan failed and was discontinued by the Dutch National Archives in 2010. In contrast, German models are still running, successfully. More and more German archivists use them to appraise records.⁵

I can draw another picture concerning digital record keeping. Approximately 20 years ago the first serious debates on digital records keeping began in the archival community. At the European level, for instance, the DLM-Forum was established.⁶ Concerning German archivists, it was attended mainly by archivists from the Bundesarchiv, the National Archives of Germany. However, archivists from regional

³ Christhard Schrenk, Hubert Weckbach, Die Vergangenheit für die Zukunft bewahren. Das Stadtarchiv Heilbronn. Geschichte - Aufgaben - Bestände (Veröffentlichungen des Archivs der Stadt Heilbronn 33, 1993).

⁴ T. K. Bikson and E.J. Frinking, Preserving the present. Towards viable electronic records, The Hague 1993 and Terry Cook, What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift, *Archivaria* 43 (1997), pp. 32-33.

⁵ For example the hessian state archives began last year to appraise taxation records with the method horizontal and vertical appraisal (not yet published). The method was developed by the state archives of Baden-Württemberg and Nordrhein-Westfalen. The city archives of Cologne runs a new project to appraise personal papers with a documentation profile, see: Gisela Fleckenstein, Ein Nachlass für das Historische Archiv der Stadt Köln? Übernahmekriterien und Bewertung auf der Grundlage eines Dokumentationsprofils, in: Marcus Stumpf, Katharina Tiemann (ed.), Nichtamtliches Archivgut in Kommunalarchiven, Teil 1: Strategien, Überlieferungsbildung, Erschließung. Beiträge des 19. Fortbildungsseminars der Bundeskonferenz der Kommunalarchive (BKK) in Eisenach vom 10. – 12. November 2010 (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Archivpflege 24, Münster 2011) pp. 22-37.

⁶ All information about DLM-Forum, see: <http://www.dlmforum.eu> (24.07.2012).

state archives also attended the forum from the outset. The main focus of this forum was to discuss and set standards for digital records keeping, e.g. the MoReq-standard, one of the most important systems of standardization, was established during this forum.

Some years later the OAIS-model was published and was accepted as an ISO Standard. The setting of standards initiated the set-up of digital archives worldwide and led to a worldwide community of digital records keepers. One of the places where this community came together, annually, was the iPRES conference. At the fourth iPRES conference in Beijing, Christian Keitel, archivist at the regional state archive of Baden-Württemberg, presented a catalogue of criteria for trustworthiness of digital repositories.⁷ This catalogue was worked out by a network called nestor.⁸ These standards were devised to integrate them into the discussion of an international working group (RLG/OCLC) for standards. In the same session a group of archivists from the University of Glasgow and the Dutch National Archives presented a toolkit for audits of digital repositories (DRAMBORA).⁹ Archivists and librarians were supposed to use this tool to identify, assess and calculate risks for their digital repositories before beginning an external certification.

This shows that both, Dutch and German archivists participate equally in international networks on digital record keeping. With regards to digital repositories German archivists are even one step ahead. Since 2006, they have established digital archives on all three administrative levels, in the Bundesarchiv, at the national level, in Regional state archives and in municipal archives.¹⁰ In contrast, the Dutch National Archives installed a digital repository in 2010.¹¹ This highlights that the Germans implemented digital repositories earlier than the Dutch.

To sum up this chapter: There is a lack of participation of German archivists in international networks and publications, especially concerning appraisal. Dutch archivists seem to have a greater awareness for the importance of international

⁷ Christian Keitel, Certification Efforts at Nestor Working Group and Cooperation with Certification Efforts at RLG/OCLC to Become an International ISO Standard, see: <http://ipres.las.ac.cn/program.jsp> (24.07.2012).

⁸ Nestor is the German competence network for digital preservation, see: http://www.langzeitarchivierung.de/Subsites/nestor/EN/Home/home_node.html;jsessionid=BD1A7EE64E7BC075F2215E376D1C6ED7.prod-worker5 (24.07.2012).

⁹ Perla Innocenti, Andrew McHugh, Seamus Ross, Raivo Ruusalepp, Digital Curation Centre (DCC) and Digital Preservation Europe (DPE) Audit Toolkit: DRAMBORA, see: <http://ipres.las.ac.cn/program.jsp> (24.07.2012).

¹⁰ Cities and towns in Germany are self-governed. Their administration is separated from the state administration.

¹¹ See: <http://www.nationaalarchief.nl/organisatie/missie> (24.07.2012).

networks than German archivists have. But I think the Germans have good policies and solutions in some cases. In order to link German archivists more to the international discourse, we have to make them aware of the importance of international debates. To my mind, archivists will learn this more easily if they are connected to the international debate right from the start of their career. Therefore, we have to set up this connection in education. The findings of international debates must be discussed in lessons and then need to be compared with the German findings. Once they have completed their training, our students will then know where German findings stand, and how they compare to international debates.

The study programmes of Marburg Archives School contain a wide range of subjects. Some are specifically German and do not need to be linked to the international debate. The most important of them have to be linked to international discourse. In my opinion, these are appraisal, description and digital records keeping.

As mentioned, German archivists are silent in the international debate on appraisal, but they have a lot of policies, plans and practices that could be interesting to discuss on an international level. I think we need to train German students of archival science to participate in the international debate on appraisal. Students have to know the importance of international standards, such as the ISAD (G), to describe archival material, and the EAD, to exchange data, so that catalogues and finding aids can be used worldwide.

Teaching appraisal and description also means to include records management in lessons. We teach the German tradition, which is quite different to the international records management system. German administration agencies use more and more workflow and software tools, based on policies of international records management. If our archivists want to fulfil their tasks in appraisal and description, concerning modern digital records, they have to know these policies. The Marburg Archives School has partly integrated elements of records management, but we need to go still further and offer complete courses on records management.

This point leads me to digital records keeping, an issue on which the international community cooperates. Without doubt German students of archival science have to get to know the findings of the international debates on digital archives and digital records keeping. All international debates about these issues should be integrated in our education. At Marburg Archives School we have a tradition of integrating international findings in our lessons. An example for this would be a description

seminar which includes the ISAD (G) standard and units about EAD. Furthermore, in one of my recently taught lecture on appraisal I included a unit about the international debate on appraisal and compared it to the German discussion. Moreover, we have employed a new teacher for record management skills. He will teach international records management. Before starting the teaching job at the Archives Scholl, he worked at the European Central Bank, as a record manager, experience which he can now incorporate into his lessons. Finally, all lessons on digital records keeping and digitization include international findings and our students use a lot of international literature, especially concerning digital records keeping.

The Marburg Archives School offers their students international connections.

Students can surf the internet in our two PC-rooms.¹² The School possess the best assorted library of archival science in the German speaking region. Our students can find a wide range of international literature there, including all important international journals and a lot of online-literature.¹³ It is not only interesting for our students but also for researchers of archival science such as our neighbours from Austria, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

The Archives School is a member of international working groups of archival educators and trainers, for example, NAET and SEA.¹⁴ We participate in the ERASMUS Programme, ARCHIDIS and will continue to do so in the future. In this context we bring together German students of archival sciences and students from other countries. This is state of the art. I think we have achieved a good, but not a very good standard. There is more potential to integrate international issues. Before I'll present my thoughts on improving our archivist training, I would like to explain the German system for educating archivists. It is integrated in the administration of state archives. It works like a trainee programme. The student applies for a training job at the state archives. Once he receives it, he is employed as a civil service trainee. He is then educated either on a undergraduate or a postgraduate level. The undergraduate programme is divided into an 18 month internship in a state archive and a training of the same length at the Marburg Archives School. The postgraduate programme includes an internship of 11 months at a state archive, twelve month training at the Archive School and an exam.

¹² Marburg Archives School offers 28 computers to about 35 students.

¹³ You can through a glance on the library on: <http://www.archivschule.de/bibliothek> (24.07.2012).

¹⁴ See: <http://www.archidis-naet.eu> (24.07.2012).

EU countries agreed on the standardization of their study programmes, using the Bologna process.¹⁵ A lot of German civil service trainee programmes have been changed in accordance with this process, but not the programmes of archivists. This is something that still remains to be done. The Bologna process simplifies the integration of international elements into educational programmes. Once we implement it, the postgraduate programme will be our starting point. The implementation of international elements into our study programmes shall be undertaken in three steps:

Firstly, next to German, English shall be established as the second official language in which lessons will be conducted. The draft of the new legal base for the postgraduate programme already contains this prerequisite. If we are able to implement English as a teaching language, it would allow us to invite English speaking teachers of archival science, and international archivists, to give lectures at our Archives School, and we could involve them in the planning and supervision of our exams. Integrating more English speaking members of the archival community into our lessons would be of particular importance for digital records keeping, but it would also be useful for appraisal and records management

Secondly, we plan to create legal prerequisites for student and teacher exchange programmes. This is one of my aims for the future. On a European level the Lisbon-protocol contains details on legal prerequisites for the exchange of students. The protocol states that 20 % of the students that started in the same academic year should stay at a foreign university for three month. We won't achieve this within the next years because the legal base of our study programmes doesn't agree with the Lisbon-protocol. Therefore, we have to negotiate with all state archives in order to change the structure of our study programmes. We will, however, aim at setting up the student and teacher exchange programmes as fast as possible.

Thirdly, we have to persuade the heads of the state archives, since they are the authority for archivist training that they will derive benefit from young archivists who completed part of their education in a foreign country. Since, in my opinion staying abroad supports openness for new approaches in archival science, which students could then integrate into their working routines.

Conclusion

¹⁵ See: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11088_en.htm (24.07.2012).

German archivists have made a lot of important findings and developed useful models in archival science, but so far they have failed to make their findings part of international discourses. To make German archivists aware of the importance of international networks and debates the opportunities of international connections need to be shown to them right from the beginning of their career.