

ARCHIVAL SUMMER SEMINAR IN GERMANY, 2008

The GHI's sixteenth archival summer seminar in Germany took place from June 16 to June 27. This year's group visited research institutions and met with archivists and scholars in Speyer, Koblenz, Cologne, and Weimar. The aim of the seminar was to introduce the Ph.D. students in German history to the wide range of research institutions in Germany and to support them in preparing their prospective dissertation research in German archives and libraries. In the first part of the seminar, the participants learned to read documents in old German handwriting. The second part of the seminar consisted of visits to local, state, and federal archives and libraries to get to know the German archival system and learn the basics of *Archivkunde*. The group also met with two scholars to discuss research methods and practices and to receive advice on the practical issues of archival work.

As in former years, the seminar started off with a one-week course in paleography led by Walter Rummel, who heads the Landesarchiv Speyer. In accordance with the participants' research topics, the documents he taught the group to read covered the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. In addition to an introduction to the evolution of German handwriting and the technical aspects of paleography, the course also covered the basics of *Quellenkunde*.

Following the paleography course, the group spent a day at the Bundesarchiv Koblenz. During the morning session, archivist Jörg Filthaut introduced the participants to *Archivkunde* and explained the characteristics of the *Umlaufverfahren*, a practice employed by administrations to reduce the institutions' workload and to optimize bureaucratic efficiency. The explanation of the "secret language" of symbols and colors used to communicate between different departments, subdivisions, and staff members will certainly prove valuable to the students when working with government documents.

In the afternoon, the seminar group met with Tim Geiger, a historian working at the Institut für Zeitgeschichte in Berlin on the *Edition der Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik*, who shared his own research experiences with the seminar's participants. Using his Ph.D. dissertation—a study of the conflict between Atlanticists and Gaullists within the CDU/CSU in the 1960s—as an example, he offered helpful advice on how to identify relevant material and approach archives, and how to organize and structure precious time at the archives.

The next station of the seminar was Cologne, where a large number of archives are situated. The first one the group visited was the Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, where Eberhard Illner and his colleagues offered a full day of sessions. One of the highlights was a tour through the

archive's vast holdings. The participants were shown original documents from the middle ages to the postwar era. They also deepened their knowledge in *Archiv-* and *Quellenkunde* and learned about finding aids, historical dictionaries, and paleographical aids.

The second day in Cologne started with a visit to the Rheinisch-Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv, one of the central economic archives in Germany. It holds the papers of private companies, as well as German chambers of industry and commerce. Ulrich Soénius and Christian Hillen explained the archive's organization, gave an overview of its holdings, talked about the specifics of private archives, and offered helpful advice on a number of research questions from the participants.

In the afternoon, the group was given the chance to see the originals of Otto Sander's seminal photographic work *Menschen des 20. Jahrhunderts* at the Photographische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur. Rajka Knipper presented a selection of Sander's pictures of German society from the 1920s and 1930s and his documentation of the city of Cologne before its destruction during the war. This provided an excellent glimpse of the multifaceted character of photographs as historical sources. It was complemented by Barbara Hofmann-Johnson's tour through the center's current exhibition on Man Ray and Sigmar Polke, which, apart from its aesthetic value, offered insight into museological and art historical aspects of photography.

On the seminar's last day in Cologne, Joachim Oepen welcomed the group to the Archiv des Erzbistums Köln. He explained the principle of provenance, which is especially important with regard to historical developments that led to administrative changes on the regional and state levels. For example, in the early nineteenth century, secularization resulted in the breakup of church archives' holdings, which were transferred to state and local archives, creating a complicated network of diverse archives. Something similar happened in the postwar era, when new *Länder* and *Bistümer* were created. Following the theoretical part, the students did a hands-on exercise in working with finding aids.

The third and last stop of the seminar was Weimar. Here the group went to the Gedenkstätte Buchenwald, where it was given an excellent tour of the grounds by Martin Eckstein. After the tour, Wolfgang Röhl led the students through the Gedenkstätte's museological collection, which includes archeological findings, items donated by former inmates or their families, and post-1945 memorabilia. Finally, archivist Sabine Stein presented the archival holdings of the Gedenkstätte. Since the SS destroyed most of its documents at the end of the war, sources are scattered and incomplete, but the researchers at Buchenwald work hard to reconstruct the camp's and the Gedenkstätte's histories. In this sense, Buchenwald

allows unique insights into the legacies of National Socialism, the Holocaust, the GDR, and reunification.

The last day of the seminar was devoted to the Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek in Weimar. Roland Bärwinkel led the group through the extraordinary rococo reading room and library that had been destroyed by a fire in 2004; they were rebuilt in record time and could be reopened last year. Some participants' hopes to be able to return to Weimar to do research at the HAAB further intensified after they saw the wonderful new, additional library building. Following the tour and a meeting with the library's director, Michael Knoche, Johannes Mangei and his team talked about the library's efforts to regain those books lost in the fire. Hans Zimmermann presented the journal *Simplicissimus*, which has been digitized and made available for online research by the library (<http://www.simplicissimus.info/>).

Finally, historian Dorothee Brantz (TU Berlin) spent an afternoon with the group talking about the challenges of working with autobiographical sources and the practical aspects of research. She also recommended ways to organize and use archival material after returning from the archives. Making the transition from doing archival research to writing the dissertation can be a challenge. To avoid getting lost in the masses of notes archival visits usually result in, using a system to keep track of all records and writing short summaries of one's findings often prove helpful.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all the individuals and organizations that contributed to the 2008 Archival Summer Seminar in Germany. An announcement of the program for the 2009 seminar can be found on our web site www.ghi-dc.org.

Corinna R. Unger (GHI)

Participants and Their Topics

WAITMAN BEORN (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Murderous Choices: The Wehrmacht and the Holocaust in the East

JULIA BROOKINS (University of Chicago), German Texas in the American Empire, 1845–1898

THOMAS BURNETT (University of California, Berkeley), Extinction in German Natural History, 1790–1830

MARTINA CUCCHIARA (Notre Dame University), "Bitter Times": Catholic Sisters in Germany from 1933 to 1948

MARTIN GUTMANN (Syracuse University), Protecting the Racial Body: West Germany's Response to the Red Army Faction

YAAKOV KABALEK (University of Virginia), "To Serve Humanity": Memories of the Rescue of Jews from Nazi Persecution in East and West Germany (1945–1961)

JAMES PASTERNAK (University of Minnesota), The Power of Metaphor and the Dissonant Voices of Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century German Medievalism

GABRIELE VON ROEDERN (University of Iowa), Questionable Pasts: Nazis, Celebrities, and Consumer Society in Post-War West Germany and Austria

JEREMY WEYERMAN (University of Michigan), Different States, Different People? East and West German Understandings of Personality and Individualism

SHIRLEY YE (Harvard University), Hanseatic and Chinese Merchant Networks in China's Ports and Hinterlands, 1829–1940