

20TH ARCHIVAL SUMMER SEMINAR IN GERMANY

Seminar in Germany, June 18-29, 2012. Convener: Clelia Caruso (GHI). Participants and their dissertation topics: Nathan Delaney (Case Western Reserve University), “Modes of Extraction: German and American Copper Mining in Mexico, 1848-1910”; Jane Freeland (Carleton University, Ottawa), “Domestic Violence in Divided Germany, 1969-1990”; David Harrisville (University of Wisconsin, Madison), “‘God is with us’: Religion and the Wehrmacht Soldier”; Carla Heelan (Harvard University), “Medievalism and the Making of Modern Germany”; Noria Litaker (University of Pennsylvania), “Canonizing the Catacombs: The Transfer of Roman Catacomb Saints to Counter-Reformation Bavaria (1578-1750)”; Megan McCarthy (Columbia University), “The Empire on Display: Exhibitions of Germanic Art & Design in America, 1897-1914”; Nicolas Ostrum (SUNY Stony Brook), “Oil, Germany, and the Global Economy, 1940-1973”; Jessica Plummer (University of Texas at Austin), “Mass and National: Kolportage Novels and Symbols of the Nation, 1880-1914”; Lauren Stokes (University of Chicago), “The Migrating Mind: *Entwurzelung* and Mental Illness in the Twentieth Century”; Matthew Yokell (Texas A&M University), “Qingdao and the German Experience in China, 1880-1918”.

From June 18 to June 29, 2012, the GHI Archival Summer Seminar took place for the twentieth time. A group of ten American Ph.D. students visited archives and research institutions and met with archivists and scholars in four German cities: Speyer, Cologne, Koblenz, and Munich. The seminar seeks to give American doctoral students in the field of German and European history the opportunity to familiarize themselves with a wide range of research institutions in Germany. The two-week program started in Speyer, where the participants, under the guidance of Walter Rummel, learned how to read documents in old German handwriting. An irreplaceable partner of the GHI Archival Summer Seminar since its beginning, Walter Rummel, head of the Landesarchiv Speyer, offered a well-conceived and motivating introductory course in paleography. The group practiced their newly acquired paleographical skills with documents from the seventeenth to the twentieth century over an entire week. Moreover, they learned a great deal about the procedures of *Quellenkritik* as Rummel carefully contextualized the sources and taught the basics of *Quellenkunde*. During a tour through the Landesarchiv, the participants got to see some of the “crown jewels” from the stacks as well as the conservationist facility for old documents. Two afternoons in

Speyer were spent discussing the participants' dissertation projects. The students' presentations in a semi-formal atmosphere produced lively discussions and paved the way for intensive scholarly exchange throughout the two weeks.

The second part of the Seminar consisted of visits to federal, state, local, and private archives and libraries. First, the group visited the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz. Archivist Thekla Kleindienst explained the organization of the German archive system and introduced the participants to the vast holdings of the branches of the Bundesarchiv. Most of the time was spent on an introduction to the digital research tools of the Bundesarchiv's electronic finding aids combined with a practical exercise in archival research: The participants were assigned a fictitious research project and sent on a mission to find relevant sources in the Bundesarchiv's holdings.

Next, the group visited the municipal archive of Cologne. A long-standing partner of the GHI, Cologne's municipal archive has gained a sad notoriety: In 2009 the archive collapsed. This accident was most probably closely related to the construction of a new subway line of the Cologne Stadtbahn system. Nearly the entire collection was damaged, and the archive has been under reconstruction ever since. The deputy director of the archive, Ulrich Fischer, gave a presentation on the collapse of the archive and led a tour of the restoration facilities, which allowed the participants to gauge the amount of work and the technological expertise and equipment needed to restore archival documents. In addition to familiarizing participants with the technological aspects of this process, this tour strengthened their awareness of the fragility of historical documents and of the selection processes historical documents undergo in the process of archival storage.

The seminar's third destination was the Staatsbibliothek München. Here Patrick Frauenrath provided an introduction to the history of the library and its current function, as well as a general tour of the facilities and an introduction to the online catalog. The afternoon was dedicated to a meeting with two German graduate students who shared their knowledge about methods and practices of archival research and about Internet and database research in particular. Drawing on his own research experience, Michael Hohlfeld shared valuable tips on how to prepare archival visits and on the computer-based management, compilation and analysis of archival documents. Christiane Sibille (University of Basel), a specialist in the history of the League of Nations, introduced the group to German online research

tools and networks for researchers, providing an excellent overview of journal databases, digitization projects, archival web sites, and communication platforms for historians.

On the following day, archivist Monika von Walter welcomed the group to the Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv. She explained how numerous administrative changes on the regional and state levels affected the organization of archive holdings in Germany and thus elucidated the practical consequences of the principle of provenance. Following this theoretical introduction, the students had the opportunity to work on records related to their research topics. The last station of the seminar was the Deutsches Museum München, a museum and archival complex dedicated to the history of technology. After an inspired guided tour of the highlights of the Museum with Bruno Graf, head archivist Wilhelm Füßl gave an overview of the history of the museum and introduced participants to its archival holdings. He also explained how this archive differed from the governmental archives that the group had visited up to that point: Whereas the holdings in governmental archives are composed mostly of regular transfers from the public administration, the collections of the Deutsches Museum were mostly acquired by gift and bequest.

The GHI organizers would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to all the individuals and organizations that made the 2012 Archival Summer Seminar in Germany a success. An announcement of the 2013 seminar can be found on the GHI website.

Clelia Caruso (GHI)

