

# Abstracts of Foreign Periodicals

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## AUSTRALIA

*Archives and Manuscripts*, VOL. 3 (1966), NO. 2.

GIBBNEY, H. J., *Problems of the Australian Joint Copying Project*. P. 3-6. The more than 3,000 reels of microfilm made of records in England relating to Australia now pose the problem of finding aids. Before a definitive plan is entered upon, the problem should be studied by a group of competent archivists. Tentatively proposed is the xerographic reproduction of the main original finding aids that were copied with the records. For the period wherein there are no such registers the group must develop a solution *ab ovo*.

STRAHAN, F., *Melbourne University Archives*. P. 17-20. Inadequate staff and salaries, unsatisfactory buildings and equipment, and lack of independence from other government agencies such as libraries have contributed to the unhappy state of archives in Australia. "Yet in one respect at least there is a brighter image. One of the most exciting developments . . . has been the establishment of repositories by Universities, and the rapid growth of collections concentrating in the field of business records." Libraries have opposed this development of university repositories; concentration on business records helps to meet the traditional objections as well as to provide material for staff researchers. Melbourne University now has more than 4,000 running ft. of such archives. Details of liaison with businesses and of storing, sorting, and providing preliminary inventories are given.

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## FRANCE

*Gazette des Archives*, N.S. NO. 53 (1966).

*Les Archives et la recherche, thème du XII<sup>e</sup> Congrès national des archivistes français* (Archives and research: theme of the 12th National Congress of French Archivists). P. 89-140. The research scholars' point of view with respect to finding aids, reference books, accessibility to each, consultation with staff, availability of records at a central location, and examination of nonpublic documents is presented by university professors, and replies to each point, in detail, are made by members of the staff of the Archives Nationales and of the archives of several *départements*. Suggestions are practical, comments are pertinent, replies are factual. Lack of money, lack of space, shortage of personnel, new training requirements for personnel, increased numbers of researchers, shifts in periods and types of research, changes in background preparation of researchers are all discussed. University scholars account for 59 percent of the users of archives; the number of foreign researchers increased 110 percent over 1955. The proposal that researchers—especially teams of students under close guidance—can contribute to archival tasks such as preparing name lists, preliminary sorting, and arranging small series of documents received serious attention. Mutual concern for common problems was recognized; *aggiornamento* of archival repositories, archival practices, and archivists' habits was clearly indicated.

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## VENEZUELA

*Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación*, VOL. 56 (1966), NO. 210.

TANODI, AURELIO, *La paleografía y los archivos* (Paleography and archives). P. 5-14. Etymologically the word "paleography" means deciphering old writing. It did not become a science until the 17th century, at which time it was applied to ancient and medieval manuscripts and shortly thereafter to Greek. In the present century, and to a large degree in the 19th century, it has been used for study of manuscripts from all parts of the world. Although there has always been a tendency to consider paleography applicable only to such materials as Latin and Greek and manuscripts on papyrus, in its true sense paleography is the deciphering of any difficult manuscript. Before the emergence, in the 17th century, of paleography as a separate discipline, reading of Latin and Greek texts was done in a purely empirical manner; it was merely a disagreeable necessity. Paleography as a science has developed into a study of the evolution of writing. It deals not only with merely deciphering manuscripts but also with establishing the authenticity of ancient material and dating it. The history of writing is closely related to the degree of culture existing in any given place at any given time. Archivists are constantly faced with paleographic and linguistic problems, since all documents of antiquity and of the Middle Ages are in a style of writing that requires special training to read. The specific task of the paleographer is simply to be able to read the documents; many of these scholars, however, have become expert editors, researchers, medievalists and sometimes university professors of the sciences auxiliary to history. Even for the study of documents dating from the beginning of the modern period, a certain skill in paleography is necessary. This is particularly true in those European countries in which one finds difficult writing, such as Gothic lettering, Spanish court documents, the French *lettre financière*, and in England the secretary or chancery hands. Even more difficult is the reading of German *Fraktur* or *Kanzleischrift*. An indispensable adjunct of paleographic work in Europe is the study of languages, above all Latin, which was the official language of the Occident through the Middle Ages and in some countries until quite recent times. In Latin America paleography is less important than in Europe, but it is nevertheless necessary. Treatises on paleography usually end with the appearance of printing in the middle of the 15th century. Spain presents an exception because of the peculiarities of some of the type used in that country as well as certain peculiarities of handwriting that persisted through the 17th century. Paleography, as applied to Spanish, therefore requires a specialized training. It is necessary to know the various kinds of both print and handwriting and, further, to be able to recognize both the geographical location and the approximate date of a document. An additional difficulty in Latin America is the use of indigenous words. In our classes of Latin and Hispano-American paleography as taught in Argentine archives, we have had to pay particular attention to the "italic" script. Inasmuch as there is no scientific name for the evolution of this style of writing, we suggest the term "neography," which was accepted by the first Convention for Paleography and Neography in Cordoba, Argentina, in December 1956. While it is possible to learn to read old manuscripts merely by practice, it is highly desirable that a paleographer be given much more extensive and scientific training.

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## YUGOSLAVIA

*Vjesnik Historijskog Arhiva u Rijeci i Pazinu*, VOL. 10 (1964-65).

STULLI, BERNARD, "*Arhivska gradja*" u novom arhivskom zakonodavstvu S R Hrvatske ("Archival documents" in the new archival legislation of the Socialistic Republic of Croatia). P. 291-322. A discussion of the basic principles of the law of 1965 on protection of archival documents and the archives of Croatia.

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