

The International Scene: News and Abstracts

FRANK B. EVANS *and*
MILTON O. GUSTAFSON, *Editors*

Vietnam. [The following statement was submitted by Professor Nguyen The Anh, formerly of the Department of History, University of Saigon, and now living in Toulouse, France. *Ed.*]

The National Archives of the Republic of Vietnam: A Case of the Scattering of Historical Documents

In the bibliographic chapter of his *Dai Việt thông sử* (Complete history of the great Viet), Lê Quý Dôn, the scholar of eighteenth-century Vietnam, deplored the dispersion and destruction of ancient books and writings by wars and revolutions, fire and water. Naturally, archival holdings have suffered greatly from the recent thirty-year long war; but, worse than that, one of the side effects of this war has been the loss, in this country still imbued with Confucian culture until recent years, of the Confucian tradition for which the transmission and preservation of the memory of the past is of utmost importance. Not only have the records of the different offices and services been merrily sown to the wind through lack of concern of the officials in charge, but the national archives have been treated offhandedly by the government in spite of the protests of their conscientious conservators, considered too petty to be heeded.

Prospects have never seemed very bright since the agreements, after the Geneva Convention in 1954, made with France regarding the ownership of historical documents. While the archives of the ex-governor-generalship of Indochina were to be transferred to France, those of local governments were to be left to the safekeeping of the newly independent state, including the ancient records of the Nguyễn monarchy. However, in the past twenty years nobody seems to know for sure where one can find the archives of the *résidence supérieure* of Annam, reputedly kept at Hué at the seat of the representative of the government in Central Vietnam.

The records of the Nguyễn monarchy had already fared badly by

Materials for this department should be sent to Frank B. Evans, GSA, NARS, Regional Office Building, Room 7016, 7th and D St. SW., Washington, D.C. 20407.

1946 when most of them were destroyed by fire. Only about one-fifth remain bound into 611 volumes of approximately 400 folios each¹ and preserved together with the papers of Emperor Bảo-Dai's administration at the annex of the Service of National Archives, in Dalat. They escaped destruction during the Vietcong offensive of spring 1968 (which was not the case for many wood blocks used for the xylographic printing of the books compiled by the Bureau of the Annals under the Nguyễn emperors: they were used as fuel by soldiers guarding the buildings!), only to be hastily bundled off to Saigon in April 1975 when the South Vietnamese government decided to abandon Dalat. But the question to which no answer has yet been given is how many were transferred, and how many strayed en route?

One might think that the archives of the former government of Cochinchina, having never been moved from their primary abode in Saigon, would have suffered less, if at all, from harm. But the imperfect conditions in which they are preserved, despite the good will of custodians insufficient in number and desperately destitute of means, have greatly contributed to their deterioration, not counting that their incomplete inventory has facilitated permanent "borrowing" now and again by unscrupulous users.

In these circumstances it is not astonishing to learn from news agencies of the recent shipment abroad of treasures from the Vietnamese National Archives; for those who have decided to take advantage of every aspect of the Vietnam War and who have control of means of transportation would not miss the opportunity offered by the chaos during the last days of the war to bring out of the country what they think they can sell to foreign institutions for a profit. One cannot know yet what part of truth resides in these conjectures. However, the scattering by the war of historical documents will surely bring a serious setback to research on Vietnamese history for many years to come, as will the present regime's policy of banning publications issued under the former government—if one can rely on different recent reports from Saigon.

UNESCO. UNESCO has now published the final report of the Intergovernmental Conference on Planning National Documentation, Library and Archives Infrastructures, which was organized in cooperation with FID, IFLA, and ICA at UNESCO headquarters in Paris and held September 23–27, 1974. The conference brought together 254 delegates from 86 member states of UNESCO and 63 observers from organizations of the United Nations system, other inter-

¹ These documents are designated under the generic term *châu bản*, literally "red documents," because they bear apostils made with cinnabar by the sovereign's brush. In my paper presented at the 29th International Congress of Orientalists, in Paris in July 1973 (reprinted in *Etudes Interdisciplinaires sur le Vietnam*, 1974, pp. 105–11), I have stressed their importance to the research of Vietnamese history and expressed the wish that they be protected against deterioration. How far was I then from suspecting the ill fate awaiting them!

governmental organizations, and international nongovernmental organizations and foundations. Its successful outcome was the result of wholehearted and unanimous support given by developing and advanced countries alike for the concept of national information systems, known under the acronym NATIS, and for objectives set forth for transforming this concept into action.

The concept of NATIS is designed as a framework for concerted action at the national level, and provides governments with a set of guidelines which will enable them to give a unified sense of direction and common aim to the diverse information activities being carried out in specific subject fields. NATIS implies that the government—national, state, or local—should maximize the availability of all relevant information through documentation, library, and archives services, just as in principle it takes responsibility for the basic primary and secondary education of its citizens. It also implies that the NATIS structure will vary in different countries, but that coordination of all elements must be the main goal.

The final report contains the proceedings of the conference, the list of participants, the text of the recommendations by the conference, and the sixteen objectives of NATIS, and copies may be obtained from the Department of Documentation, Libraries, and Archives at the UNESCO Secretariat, Paris.

International Council on Archives. The International Council on Archives (ICA) has received from the Council on Library Resources (CLR) a grant of \$72,000 toward support of the ICA secretariat over the next three years.

The funds will be used to add to the secretariat staff, housed in the French National Archives, an executive assistant and a bilingual secretary to assist the executive director and relieve in part the volunteer archivists whose extensive contributed efforts have been largely responsible for holding the organization together since its establishment in 1950.

The strengthened full-time ICA staff is expected to enable this world organization of the archival profession to expand its programs in such areas as: (1) the development and training of archivists, (2) the microfilming and preservation of materials, (3) the publishing of guides to the sources of the history of nations, and (4) the provision of assistance in the establishment or improvement of archival institutions in the countries of the developing world.

An expected increase in dues, anticipated royalties from its publications, and additional grants and contracts from international bodies are figured to make the ICA, including the staff additions, self-supporting at the termination of the CLR grant on June 30, 1978.

Great Britain. The Contemporary Scientific Archives Centre at Oxford, directed by Professor Margaret Gowing with aid from the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, moved to 10-11 Keble

Road, Oxford, in September. Continuing its work of locating, sorting, cataloging, and arranging for the deposit of scientific papers, it has already processed forty-one collections.

ABSTRACTS

Brazil. [LAURA V. MONTI, University of Florida] *Mensário do Arquivo Nacional*, vol. 5, no. 2 (February 1974). This issue features an article on an agreement between the federal University of Rio de Janeiro and the National Archives of Brazil on the cooperation of both institutions on archival matters and historical research, and the publication of the results obtained by both institutions in those fields. The issue also includes the UNESCO resolutions on the archives of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and on the activities of the International Council on Archives, which were presented to the general meeting of UNESCO in Paris, October 17-20, 1972.

Mensário do Arquivo Nacional, vol. 5, no. 4 (April 1974). This issue includes (pp. 9-11) a report by Minister of Justice Professor Alfred Buzaid on the activities of the National Archives in Rio de Janeiro for the period 1969-74. Buzaid speaks of the efforts made to surmount the idea of the Archives as something static, by means of adopting modern ways of information retrieval and lending systems. He cites the cooperation of the National Archives in the domestic field with the state Archives, that will lead to the better protection of documents, and in the international field the tie with UNESCO. The National Archives gives support to various programs to awaken the conscience and the interest of administrators who began to ask for its technical assistance, and it has participated in international congresses and cooperated with the Organizao de Arquivos de Empresa (OEA). The minister refers to the increase in research and the creation of such university courses and seminars as those in archival administration. Publications have increased; restoration of documents, maps, and books has accelerated; and technical assistance has been given to the new branch created in Brazilia.

Mensário do Arquivo Nacional, vol. 5, no. 5 (May 1974). Darcy Damasceno, in his report presented to the national symposium of university professors of history (pp. 18-24), gives a general view of the manuscript collections in the Biblioteca Nacional (Rio de Janeiro) covering the history of Brazil from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, with a major concentration of documents of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Finding aids include a card catalog, topographical indexes, printed inventories, and catalogs. The manuscripts are divided into a section for collections, including all those grouped by origin or subject such as the biographical documents, the *Rio Branco Collection*, and the *Pedro de Angelis Collection*; and a second section for single documents. The second section is divided into three subject areas: Brazil in general, the various Brazilian states, and mis-

cellaneous other subjects. A general division is made for correspondence and another for codices which, according to the author, are one of the richest sources for the study of colonial Brazil.

Mensário do Arquivo Nacional, vol. 5, no. 9 (September 1974). Wilma Schaefer Correa, *chefe do serviço de Registro e Assistência*, reports on the situation of the Archives of Espírito Santo (pp. 19–20). Compared to her previous visits, the major recent difference was that documents are now organized by office of origin. Gradually, single documents are being analyzed and placed in boxes recently acquired. There is an urgent need for restoration and disinfection, but conditions in the Archives today at least permit scholars and students to do research. In the new budget is a provision for a new building.

Mensário do Arquivo Nacional, vol. 5, no. 11 (November 1974). For the training of archival personnel there is already in Brazil a permanent course established at the university level, but training in modern archival techniques will be enhanced by the creation of the *Escola Superior* (Superior school) for archivists. An article in this issue, pp. 13–16, traces the evolution of specialized teaching in the field since the creation in 1922 of the National Archives and indicates how the program is funded. A transcript of the 1974 resolution of the *Conselho Federal de Educação* (Federal council of education) is added, establishing the curriculum, number of hours, and the type of diploma to be given.

A report of the activities of the Library of the National Archives, pp. 20–22, indicates that more than ten thousand requests for consultation were received from 1970 to June 1974. More than twelve thousand volumes were inventoried, not including periodicals and rare books. Also, the library maintains a rare book room with an important collection that was used in preparing a 1972 exhibit celebrating the international book year. In addition to finding and restoring library material, there were special projects in cooperation with other institutions and planning for the microfilming of all the collections.

Mensário do Arquivo Nacional, vol. 6, no. 3 (March 1975). In his report on operations in the National Archives, presented to the secretary of justice (pp. 1–81), National Archives Director Raul do Rêgo Lima notes the growing public interest in documents of historical character and the growth of consciousness of the responsibility the National Archives has as guardian of these documents. He calls attention also to the need for a national system of archives responsible for all archival policies, as recommended by UNESCO. Lima, who is a member of the Executive Committee of the International Council on Archives, calls attention to the international activities of the National Archives. After these generalizations, a report is given on the activities of each section.

Arquivo & Administração, vol. 3, no. 1 (April 1975). Helena Correa

Machado, writing about the main criteria in the organization of archives (pp. 6-13) explains that the article results from her attendance at a course by the Organizao de Arquivos de Empresa, and deals with all phases and areas involved in the establishment or reorganization of an archival agency. The topic is covered in outline form, and a short bibliography of basic works is appended.

France. [PAUL V. GUITÉ, National Archives and Records Service] *La Gazette des Archives*, n.s., no. 87 (1974). Michel Duchein of the Direction des Archives de France and Françoise Flieder of the Centre national de la recherche scientifique have collaborated to produce a study on the disinfection of archival documents attacked by microorganisms and insects. These cause the most damage to graphic documents, but they are comparatively easy to eradicate. Gérard Naud, director of services of the Archives of the Département of Sarthe, offers a critique of the conference on the National Archives and statistical research held in Washington in 1968 and of the published conference proceedings edited by Meyer Fishbein. Naud praises the quality of the organization of the conference and recommends that the book be read carefully.

Etienne Taillemite, president of the Association des archivistes français, gives a synthesis of the discussions of the regional conferences of the association in 1974 on cultural activities of the archives services. There is general agreement that these activities cover the fields of expositions, educational services, conferences, and, more extensively, the participation of archivists in the cultural activities of their region. The author sees the proper activities of the archives as essentially cultural, with the majority of archivists becoming more preoccupied with cultural activities, less introverted, and prepared to develop their cultural and archival activities together provided they receive the financial support heretofore denied them by the ministry.

German Federal Republic. [GEORGE O. KENT, University of Maryland] *Der Archivar*, vol. 27, no. 4 (November 1974). Articles in this issue deal with the opening of a new branch of the Federal Archives in Rastatt as a memorial for the German liberation movement, by P. Bucher (col. 445-48); centralization and decentralization in archival practices, by C. Haase (col. 447-54); acquisition of files and archival practices in Hesse, by W. Schüler (col. 453-60); and, continued from the May 1974 issue, a discussion of the preservation of personal papers of provincial delegates in the Düsseldorf State Archives, by F. Henning (col. 461-64).

There are, in addition, sections on legal and administrative regulations, announcements of meetings, book reviews, personal news, and miscellaneous announcements.

Der Archivar, vol. 28, no. 1 (February 1975). The forty-ninth annual meeting of German archivists took place in Braunschweig in October

1974. It coincided with the thirtieth annual meeting of German historians and, recognizing the common interests and problems of both professions, took as its major theme "The Archivist as Historian." This was the topic of the welcoming speech by President Helmut Dahm, of the Society of German Archivists (col. 5-10). It is followed in the journal by a summary of the meeting, by V. Buchholz (col. 9-18).

Of the papers presented, there is a shortened version of one on changes in historical writing reflecting new interests and methods, by E. Pitz (col. 17-20); a summary of the papers and discussions on sources and source critiques in connection with traditional and new types of historical sources (col. 33-52); and a summary of the meetings of specialized archival groups (col. 53-56). H. Boberach's interesting report on the use of archives and archival work among changing new interests and methods (col. 19-34) is printed in its entirety.

A report by W. Mommsen on the fifteenth Round Table, in Ottawa, and the meeting of the executive committee of the ICA in Hyde Park, both in October 1974, completes the substantive part of this issue.

Archivalische Zeitschrift, vol. 70 (1974). Part of this issue is devoted to papers presented at a meeting on archival techniques, at Munich in October 1973. These deal with ancient paper and watermarks, by T. Gerardy; the chemistry of old and new inks, by H. Roselieb; and inks and parchments of old manuscripts, by B. Bischoff.

Other articles discuss the beginnings of financial administration in the provinces, by W.-H. Struck; the construction of a new storage building for the Lower Saxony State Archives, by G. Schüttkow; and the correspondence of Emperor Charles V in the archives and libraries of Madrid, by A. Moser.

The issue also contains book reviews and abstracts of foreign periodicals.

Italy. [LAURA V. MONTI, University of Florida] *Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato*, vol. 33, nos. 2-3 (May/December 1973). Paola Carucci, writing on the accessibility of documents (pp. 282-291), examines articles 21, 22, and 23 of the Law No. 1409 passed by the Italian government in 1963. She notes that recent documents are classified as restricted or non-restricted. In the national archives the non-restricted ones can be consulted freely except those of the last fifty years, which can be consulted for research with authorization. In the archives of the states, documents are also classified as restricted and non-restricted and the same rules are applied, provided the rules do not interfere with local ordinances.

She regards restrictions as a compromise between the obligation to maintain the secrecy of the document for the time imposed, and the obligation to satisfy the need of scholars. The author also suggests the establishment of record centers for agency records.

Carla Lodolini Tupputi describes the archives of the Provisional Board of Government of Civitavecchia, 1870 (pp. 395-428). These

archives were lost for many years because of lack of identification on the envelopes containing the documents. Humidity and deterioration had erased it. When the archives were transferred from Capo Marzio to Rome, the consequent reorganization of the archives brought to light the records of the Provisional Board. An inventory, based upon one planned in 1906, is appended.

Gaetano Grassi, writing about archival activity in the institutes of the history of the resistance and the "brief guides" thereto (pp. 429-444), notes that when the institutes were established in 1949 the founders were concerned with the preservation of documents regarding the movement and with records of the general and regional commands. After various experiments in arrangement of the material, it was finally decided that research use should determine their organization and description.

Panama. [WILBUR E. MENERAY, Tulane University Library] *Boletín Informativo del Archivo Nacional de Panama*, no. 2 (May 1975). The National Archives of Panama was established in 1904; its history is traced in this issue. The national archival agency is one of the first (1924) to be housed in a building constructed especially for archives. Also in this issue are parts of inventories of documents relating to Panamanian history, including material (1800-1837) in Panama from the Columbian period, and material (1513-76) relating to Panama in the Archivo General de Indias, in Spain.

Romania. [CARL CHARLICK, Washington, D.C.] *Revista Arhivelor*, vol. 35, no. 2 (1973). This issue contains an extensive documentation (pp. 155-71) of the general nationalization of Romanian industry in 1948; a discussion (pp. 187-92) of the archival sources and household documents of the great feudal families of Transylvania, beginning as early as the twelfth century; and an account of the abortive attempt by Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II (1741-90, ruled Transylvania 1780-90) to introduce German as the official language in Transylvania (pp. 192-97). After the death of the emperor, the use of German was allowed to lapse except in tax matters, where it persisted until the dualistic reorganization of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1867.

Revista Arhivelor, vol. 35, no. 3 (1973). Of particular interest in this issue is "Some Aspects of Technical Activity in the State Archives of Romania," in English, on pp. 561-63.

Spain. [DONALD L. KING, National Archives and Records Service] *Revista de Educación*, vol. 22, no. 235 (November-December 1974). Vicenta Cortes Alonso, in his article on the function of archives and human resources (pp. 72-83), notes that archives have existed since the science of writing came into being and have been subject to plunder by invading armies. The combining of public and private archives by the ancient Greeks converted documents into safeguards of the rights of

citizens. National, provincial, and presidential archives now serve the staff of the office of origin, the citizen, and the student. They have become an integral part of governmental organization. Control of documents must be maintained from the time of origin, through storage, to use by the researcher. The Archives of Castile are kept at Simancas, and the Archives of the Indies, at Seville, were forwarded from Madrid, Cadiz, and Simancas. Archivists must be skilled in analyzing, describing, and determining the value of records as well as knowing their provenance. The number of archivists and their subordinates in Spain has not kept pace with the volume of records being produced. Contracts for specific projects have given only temporary relief from this troublesome problem.

[WILBUR E. MENERAY, Tulane University Library] *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*, vol. 77, no. 2 (July–December 1974). This issue has a wide range of articles on archeology, history, literature, and the arts. Of particular interest to archivists is Nieves Valentín Rodrigo on biological contamination in museums, archives, and libraries (pp. 747–61). Samples of bacteria and fungi in a Madrid museum were collected and the lives of these micro-organisms were recorded under various museum conditions. The author identifies various species of fungi and bacilli and their effects upon paper.

Venezuela. [WILBUR E. MENERAY, Tulane University Library] *Boletín Histórico*, nos. 35, 36, and 37 (May and September 1974; January 1975). With these issues the *Boletín* resumes the indexing of documents relating to Venezuela in the Archives of Gran Columbia. The indexing, which began with the first issue of the *Boletín* in 1963, now includes the sections on war and marine, finances, history, and miscellaneous and supplementary material.

Yugoslavia. [CARL CHARLICK, Washington, D.C.] *Archivist*, vol. 24, no. 2 (1974). This is the latest issue of the semiannual publication of the Federation of Archivist Societies and Archives of Yugoslavia, founded in 1953.

Following a lengthy report on organizational questions, discussed at the congress of archivists held at Sibenik in October 1974, five articles on the problem of microfilming in foreign archives known to contain material related to Yugoslav history are included. A report from the Macedonian State Archives in Skopje mentions that during the twenty years covered by the report the largest quota of material of interest to Macedonia (one of the six federated republics of Yugoslavia) was supplied by the United States—a total of over 200,000 frames—and this total was closely followed by West Germany's 195,000 frames. Countries which have been historically much closer to Macedonia have supplied only negligible amounts.

Another section (pp. 179–97) presents a draft subject-outline for a forthcoming survey of Yugoslav archives.