Note

[1] See especially, "Achieving the Right Balance: Recordkeeping Informatics—Part 1," *Informaa Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (2009): 18–21; "Achieving the Right Balance: Recordkeeping Informatics—Part 2," *Informaa Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2010): 42–52; "Recordkeeping Informatics: Re-figuring a Discipline in Crisis with a Single-minded Approach," *Records Management Journal* 23, no. 1 (2013): 37–50; "A Background Paper for a Conversation on a Single-Minded Approach to Recordkeeping Informatics," International Council on Archives Congress, Brisbane, August 20–24, 2012, http://ica2012.ica.org/files/pdf/Full papers upload/ica12Final00200.pdf; and "Recordkeeping Informatics: Building a Discipline Base," Triennial Conference of the DLM Forum 7, Lisboa, 2014, http://purl.pt/26107/1/DLM2014_PDF/02%20-%20Recordkeeping%20Informatics%20Building%20the%20Discipline%20Base.pdf.

Albrecht Dürer: Documentary Biography

Edited by Jeffrey Ashcroft. New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 2017. 1,216 pp. Hardcover, 2 vols. $125.00. ISBN 978-0-300-21084-1 and 978-0-300-21084-2.

The Renaissance of Northern Europe, in tandem with the Italian Renaissance, ushered in a renewed interest in the secular aspects of human existence and the interactions relating human experiences to art, architecture, poetry, and literature. Those who pursued such studies referred to themselves as "humanists." Artist Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) was one of the most inspired and influential humanists; and he seems to have been an inveterate hoarder, who was eager to document his life for posterity.

Albrecht Dürer: Documentary Biography brings together all known documents linked to Dürer's life and work, arranged, translated, and annotated by Jeffrey Ashcroft, a research fellow at the University of St. Andrews, who devoted ten years to the project. Dürer, an accomplished painter, but most renowned for his graphic works, revolutionized the art of printmaking. Artists from across Europe admired and copied his prints, which ranged from portraits of famous people to biblical and mythological scenes to exotic animals. He was also the first artist outside Italy to leave behind a voluminous quantity of writing. Documents in this two-volume work include correspondence concerning the aesthetics of art as well as its business side; family papers; account books; notes on ancient architecture and the proportions of the human body; plans for fortifications; sundry references to Dürer gleaned from official records; and passages pertaining to him found among the papers of his acquaintances.

Documents are assembled chronologically in the volumes, translated into modern English, and annotated. The compilation is intended as a type of archival resource upon which historians, biographers, and others can build. Ashcroft calls this approach a "documentary biography." His intention was to

put the events of Dürer's life, as well as his manner of linguistic expression, into a convenient chronological scheme that could be aligned with and compared to historical and artistic developments in Europe. Dürer wrote differently as he aged and as the German language itself evolved, influenced largely by Martin Luther's vigorous vernacular prose. It is not essential for published documents to be presented in any semblance of original order if other arrangement schemes are more revealing for an editor's intended purpose and if the provenance of materials is clearly delineated.[1]

Humanist intellectuals in the Renaissance engaged in a pattern of classical epistolary exchange modeled on Cicero's letters to his friend Atticus. Such correspondence highlights the importance of networks connecting northern Renaissance writers and artists, and provides telling insights into how such relationships catalyzed and supported artistic creativity. Dürer wanted his paintings and prints to be judged as liberal art rather than as (in the more traditional view of the time) mechanical art, requiring manual skills but little or no intellect (p. 940). Several topics of discussion in the documents foreshadow the emergence of artistic copyright, for example, when the Nuremberg City Council forbade publication of material "purloined from Albrecht Dürer's prints and writings . . . until the true work is published" (p. 919) and when Dürer himself confronted Italian plagiarists who had used his distinctive monogram on counterfeit prints. The distribution of sixteenth-century prints was a harbinger of the impact of later technologies in disseminating knowledge as well as of the emergence of intellectual property law.

Art is not, as has sometimes been averred, a universal language requiring no commentary. For example, the life cycle of a work of art is not typically apparent in finished pieces. Documents pertaining to Dürer's artistic production and struggles over time leave trails that allow researchers to trace ideas, accomplishments, missteps, and other contingencies, adding valuable perspectives. Nothing biographical or historical can be adequately comprehended in isolation. The intimate details of human experience throughout history are often perceived only by means of paper traces of ordinary matters. The very routineness of mundane documentation affords a more intimate connection between researcher and subject.[2]

Historiographers point to the importance of untapped sources in raising previously unasked questions and advancing new interpretations.[3] Making seemingly minor documents available for scholarly evaluation serves as a corrective to the all-too-frequent tendency of biographers and historians to pass over the less-ordered aspects of a person's life or neglect the less-heralded incidents of history. In that respect, a symbiotic relationship connects documentary editors to the archivists who locate, appraise, and arrange and describe original materials. Whenever possible, Ashcroft compares specimens of paper to understand where an orphaned document belongs in a larger scheme—for example, if a

drawing had been torn from a particular sketchbook. He also traces the provenance of all papers, even scraps, for which such information can be discerned.

Separate indexes of places; personal names; texts; and "themes, topics, and concepts" buttress the work's main contents. A timeline of events anchors the documents in a panorama of European cultural and historical developments. Annotation of various kinds and degrees, if rooted in sufficient subject expertise, brings dry, obscure, or inscrutable written records to life. Dürer opined regarding the appreciation of art that "to the untrained, beauty is like a foreign language" (p. 253). The guidance provided by scholarly intervention has much the same effect in opening doors to the often scintillating and evocative appeal of documentary evidence. In that regard, however, Ashcroft's thorough overlay of interpretive notes belies his assertion that his documentary biography is not a biographical narrative. There is no clear-cut distinction, in my opinion, between the ways in which narratives are constructed by the users of archives and the ways in which archival functions such as accessioning, and arranging and describing, or the functions of documentary editing, contribute to those narratives.[4]

The records continuum model in archival studies suggests that archives are not immutable reserves of factual resources, but rather evolving processes of context and recontextualization whereby time and circumstance transform documents into records that are relevant for a variety of purposes.[5] Writings that once factored as vehicles for friendship, creative exchange, or the securement of rights have, for example, morphed into evidence for art history, religious upheaval, legal studies, and linguistics. Printed documentary editions and digitization projects provide expanded access to materials that are dispersed, or restricted because of fragility. The utility of each format is a function of user needs and preference, although nothing truly replaces the tactile sensation of handling original documents.[6]

Readers seeking a catalogue raisonné of Dürer's art should look elsewhere—works not directly associated with written records are not reproduced in *Albrecht Dürer*. Those seeking a more thorough assessment of Dürer's oeuvre would be well advised to consult titles listed in the extensive bibliography.[7] The amount of detail in this documentary biography is likely to be daunting for the casual reader, but scholars of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century art have reason to be grateful for the publication's abundance; and anyone curious about how people lived, thought, and reacted to change five hundred years ago will also find much of interest. Authentic historical traces, no matter where found or how voluminous, are replete with possibilities for linking historical documents to historical insight.

A recent trend in bibliographical scholarship, the "biography of the book," traces the "life cycle" of famous books from authorship, through published editions, to reception by different reading publics over time.[8] Manuscripts and manuscript collections, I suggest, have their own biography and life cycles, that include who

created them; who owned and preserved them; who acquired them and how they were valued; how they were processed; who did or did not use them; and how their formats may have changed. Dürer-related documents have been scattered and reassembled in various combinations; transcribed and translated; mined for books and articles; and sometimes lost or destroyed, known thereafter only from copies. Previous compilations are marked by varying degrees of utility. Hans Rupprich's edition,[9] for example, retaining original fifteenth and sixteenth-century linguistic forms, is hard to understand, even for readers fluent in modern German. As to the future: Ashcroft plans to expand his documentary biography in electronic format whenever other materials come to light (p. 6).

"The life of every manuscript, like that of every person, is different, and all have stories to divulge."[10] These comprehensive and accessible volumes are a welcome addition to the biography of the primary sources constituting the extant written record of one of the most engrossing figures of the northern Renaissance.

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Notes

[1] The difficulty of presenting all materials related to Dürer in any semblance of original order can be illustrated as follows: Dürer died in 1528, and his friend Willibald Pirckheimer took custody of various papers, which passed to the Imhoff family upon Pirckheimer's death in 1530. During the widespread chaos of the Thirty Years War, Amsterdam merchants obtained the papers, or at least some of them, cheaply by purchase. Five bound volumes of manuscripts were sold to the Earl of Arundel, an English collector, in the mid-seventeenth century. Sir Hans Sloane acquired the volumes in 1724 for the Royal Society. They were later transferred to the British Museum and are now in the joint custody of the British Museum and the British Library. Myriad other repositories contributed materials, including, most notably, the Herzog August Bibliotek in Wolfenbüttel; the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg; the Warburg Institute in London; and the universities of Edinburgh, Cambridge, and St. Andrews. Some originals were destroyed by the ravages of war, but their contents were preserved in handwritten copies. Much of the work consists of references to Dürer found in documents that he did not create.

[2] "Biography [is] a tracking of the physical trail of someone's path through the past, a following of footsteps. You . . . never catch them. . . . But maybe, if you [are] lucky, you might write about the pursuit of that fleeting figure in such a way as to bring it alive in the present." Richard Holmes, *Footsteps: Adventures of a Romantic Biographer* (New York: Viking, 1985), xvii.

[3] Marc Bloch, cofounder of the French journal, *Annales*, suggests that "Whenever [a historian] smells human flesh, he knows [that] therein is his prey." Quoted in André Burguière, *The* Annales *School: An Intellectual History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 17.

[4] Wendy Duff and Verne Harris, "Stories and Names: Archival Description as Narrating Records and Constructing Meanings," *Archival Science* 2, nos. 3–4 (2002): 276.

[5] Sue McKemmish, "Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice," *Archival Science* 1, no. 4 (2001): 336.

[6] "Facsimiles are rootless and untied to any place. No one can properly know or write about a manuscript without having seen it and held it in the hands." Christopher De Hamel, *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017), 2. See also Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 8: "The material is so vivid that it calls both for emotional engagement and for reflection. It is a rare and precious feeling to suddenly come upon so many forgotten lives . . . juxtaposing and entangling . . . the departed."

[7] Especially enlightening is Erwin Panofsky's *Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), originally published in 1948, but still unsurpassed.

[8] Noteworthy examples include Owen Gingrich, *The Book Nobody Read: Chasing the Revolutions of Nicolaus Copernicus* (New York: Walker and Co., 2004) on Copernicus's *De revolutionibus*; Kevin Birmingham, *The Most Dangerous Book: The Battle for James Joyce's* Ulysses (New York: Penguin, 2015); and Emma Smith's *The Making of Shakespeare's First Folio* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2015) and its companion volume, *Shakespeare's First Folio: Four Centuries of an Iconic Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[9] Hans Rupprich, *Dürer. Schriftlicher. Nachlass* (Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, 1956–69).

[10] De Hamel, *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts*, 3.

Science in the Archives: Pasts, Presents, Futures

Edited by Lorraine Daston. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017. 392 pp. Softcover and EPUB. $37.50. Softcover ISBN 978-0-22643-236-6; EPUB ISBN 978-0-22643-253-3.

Science depends on archives. From astronomers, to climate scientists, to epidemiologists, records of observations acquired, arranged and described, and made available for use are essential sources of evidence for interpreting and understanding the natural world. *Science in the Archives: Pasts, Presents, Futures*, edited by Lorraine Daston, provides a wide-ranging, nuanced, and challenging set of explorations of relationships between scientists' data and records of science, and the practices that make these into a usable past.

Lorraine Daston, director of the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, is well known for extensive scholarship on topics such as the history of objectivity and observation in science. This particular volume grew out of a working group at the Max Planck Institute that convened in summers of 2013 and 2014. This work connects to a broader initiative of the institute focused on exploring "The Sciences of the Archive" which has also resulted in publications on data histories, biodiversity, and the history of photography and film in the production of the scientific record.[1]

Daston anchors the book in the concept of "third nature." In this context, first nature is of the physical world as experienced. Second nature is the processed result of scientists' interactions with the world through observation and experiment. The results of that work—records of observation and experiment—are then curated, organized, processed, edited, and transmitted to become an essential source of scientific knowledge for scientists now and in the future as third nature.

In the context of this book, "the archive" is understood as "the physical expression of how present science creates a usable past for future science" (p. 329).