

Terra Cognita: Graduate Students in the Archives

A Retrospective on the CLIR Mellon Fellowships
for Dissertation Research in Original Sources

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Cover image: "Nova et accuratissima totius terrarum orbis tabula." Joan Blaeu, 1596-1673.
Courtesy Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

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Foreword

Around AD 150, the cartographer Ptolemy penned his *Geographia*, an atlas of regional maps and collection of longitude and latitude values detailing the world as it was known to the Romans. Central to his work was a treatise on cartography that explained the collection and organization of his data and offered projections for what a truly global map of the world could be. By sharing his methodologies, Ptolemy contributed to a conversation with the cartographers before him and those over the millennia that followed. His methods provided tools for future generations to refine and challenge his projections, compare them with competing models, and invent new forms of the map itself.

Every scholar engaged in original research can be thought of as a cartographer of sorts, contributing new knowledge and approaches to our collective *ecumene* or known world, our *terra cognita*. This volume reflects on a specific type of knowledge production: archival research by historians and humanists. Archival research is a unique and peculiar practice. It is empirical by nature, but lacks the control of variables that a study using the scientific method would employ. What can be made of observations when the subject material for your research has been selected, arranged, or discarded by others before you? The practice is also singular in its intimacy. How can one maintain objectivity after spending years reading someone's diary, or reports that exist to express a particular perspective? Scholars in archives must read the sources held within while also reading against them. Their interpretations must extend beyond the documents to the context of collecting institutions themselves: their political, social, and economic realities. This is a context of nations, empire, administrators, and bureaucracy; one of collectors, enthusiasts, inheritors, and martyrs. It's a story of library budgets, overzealous and absentminded employees, and shifting approaches to provenance. It's about the countless sources and voices that have been lost to history.

This volume surveys the current landscape of archival research and the experiences of emerging scholars seeking to navigate it. It considers how its conditions and practices have changed in recent decades and what communities invested in cultural heritage and knowledge production can do to better support new scholarship in this evolving context. To answer these questions, the volume draws upon data from the CLIR program, [Mellon Fellowships for Dissertation Research in Original Sources](#). Funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the program promotes creative approaches to original source research and recognizes exemplary graduate scholarship in the humanities and social sciences. Since 2002, CLIR has awarded [210 fellowships](#) for research in hundreds of archives on every continent except Antarctica.

At the core of this volume, in section 1, is an assessment by Lori Jahnke and Amanda Watson based on data from the final reports submitted by fellows to CLIR between 2003 and 2015. Jahnke and Watson synthesize fellows' reflections on research conditions in cultural heritage institutions and on archival training in graduate departments. Their assessment makes three key recommendations, targeted at graduate departments, cultural heritage institutions, and funders, for how they can better support original source scholarship: (1) improve graduate training, (2) build communities around archives, and (3) facilitate more robust exchanges among scholars about archival methods.

Elliott Shore and Ryan Kashanipour, mentors to the fellows, reviewed Jahnke and Watson's findings and augmented them with their own firsthand observations, which appear in section 2 of this volume. Shore and Kashanipour stress the value of interdisciplinary exchange, and recommend mentorship that attends not only to students' development as scholars, but to their emergence as professionals in an exciting but rapidly evolving environment for higher education.

CLIR subsequently shared the analysis and the mentors' reflections with leaders from a range of scholarly institutions and communities who gathered for a meeting sponsored by CLIR in January 2016 at the Library of Congress. There, participants offered feedback and engaged in a broad conversation about collections, access, methods, and support for graduate researchers. To document this rich conversation, CLIR invited participants William Thomas III, Michael Suarez, and Charles Henry to contribute additional pieces to this collection. Section 3, "The Discussion," opens with an essay by Thomas that unpacks historians' complicated attitudes about working with original sources in the digital age. While anxieties about the authenticity and long-term preservation of the digital traces of our history arise from real concerns, Thomas argues that they need not overshadow the potential for using both original sources and their digital surrogates to advance research and teaching. Following, Suarez brings the conversation back to the fundamental materiality of the physical archive and what can be gained from reading an object. As archives become more widely available digitally, he asserts, it has become more important to cultivate comprehensive understandings of textual artifacts.

The volume closes with an afterword by Charles Henry that contemplates the intellectual and contextual challenges of conducting original source research today, playfully picking at the threads of language, order, original object, and digital derivative to show the complexity of their interconnections. This complexity, he believes, is something scholars and archivists need to keep in mind as they seek to weave together knowledge and interpretation.

However imperfect these endeavors are, the continuation of these pursuits remains an indelible part of our humanity.

Improving support for junior scholars is a responsibility shared by graduate departments, cultural heritage institutions, professional associations, and funders. This volume has sought to bring authors from these interrelated communities into a dialog with one another and, most importantly, with the fellows themselves. To this end, in addition to Jahnke's and Watson's synthesis of the fellows' reports, the volume includes brief reflections by past fellows about their research experiences and what they have meant to them as individuals. Taken together, their encounters illustrate the significance of original sources to scholarship, teaching, and learning, while revealing the challenges of working in a changing research landscape.

The global map of history and culture will always have holes; such is the nature of its subject and sources. Prominent projections will be refined, challenged, and replaced with new models. While never complete, our *terra cognita* continues to grow richer and more nuanced thanks to scholars who question existing assumptions and approach collections with new inquiries and methodologies. As the fifteenth cohort of Mellon Dissertation Fellows sets sail for the archives, we invite a conversation across disciplines and institutions about this vital scholarly tradition and how to best support the individuals who pursue it.

Nicole Ferraiolo
Program Officer for Scholarly Resources, CLIR

The Analysis

Lori Jahnke and Amanda Watson examine reporting data submitted by the CLIR Mellon fellows between 2003 and 2015 and offer recommendations to cultural heritage institutions and graduate departments on improving support for graduate archival research.

Ongoing Challenges for Research Using Primary Sources: An Analysis of Mellon Dissertation Research Fellow Reports

Lori M. Jahnke, *Anthropology Librarian, Emory University*

Amanda Watson, *Librarian for English and Comparative Literature, New York University Libraries*

This study describes some of the key issues encountered by awardees of the Mellon Fellowships for Dissertation Research in Original Sources program from 2002 to 2014. Following their year-long fellowship, awardees write a report describing the challenges and successes of conducting their research. In the report, fellows reflect on their experiences with the materials they chose to study, their interactions with collections staff and other fellows, and living conditions, bureaucratic entanglements, and other issues relevant to their ability to carry out their research. Between 2003 and 2015, the fellows produced 177 reports reflecting 991 visits to more than 750 research sites (libraries, archives, museums, archaeological sites, private collections) in 64 countries (Figures 1a and 1b).

To identify trends and common themes among fellows' research experiences over the 13 cohorts studied, we reviewed each report for issues related to access of the materials, interpersonal conflicts, and cultural or other issues. We only recorded problematic events when fellows explicitly mentioned them. When they did not, we marked the item "unobservable." We also collected data on the types of sites visited, the types of materials studied, methodological problems, and research strategies such as technology used.¹

This study is divided into two major parts. The first section is a high-level overview of data gathered from the fellows' reports, followed by an in-depth discussion of the themes that emerged from the reports: barriers to access and their relationship to the research process, the value of developing two-way relationships between archives and their users, and the importance of creating scholarly communities around collections.

¹ Reports were coded by Amanda Watson, Christa Williford, and Nicole Ferraiolo.

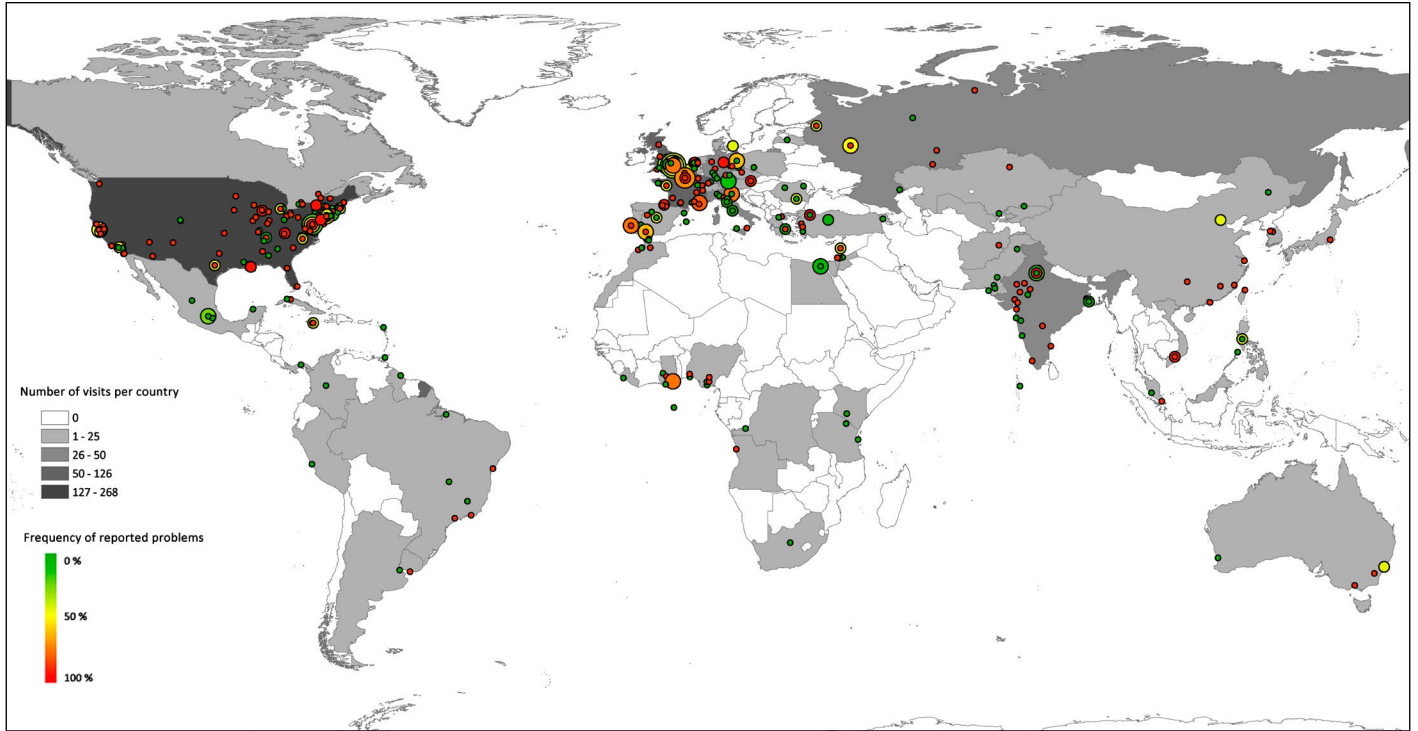
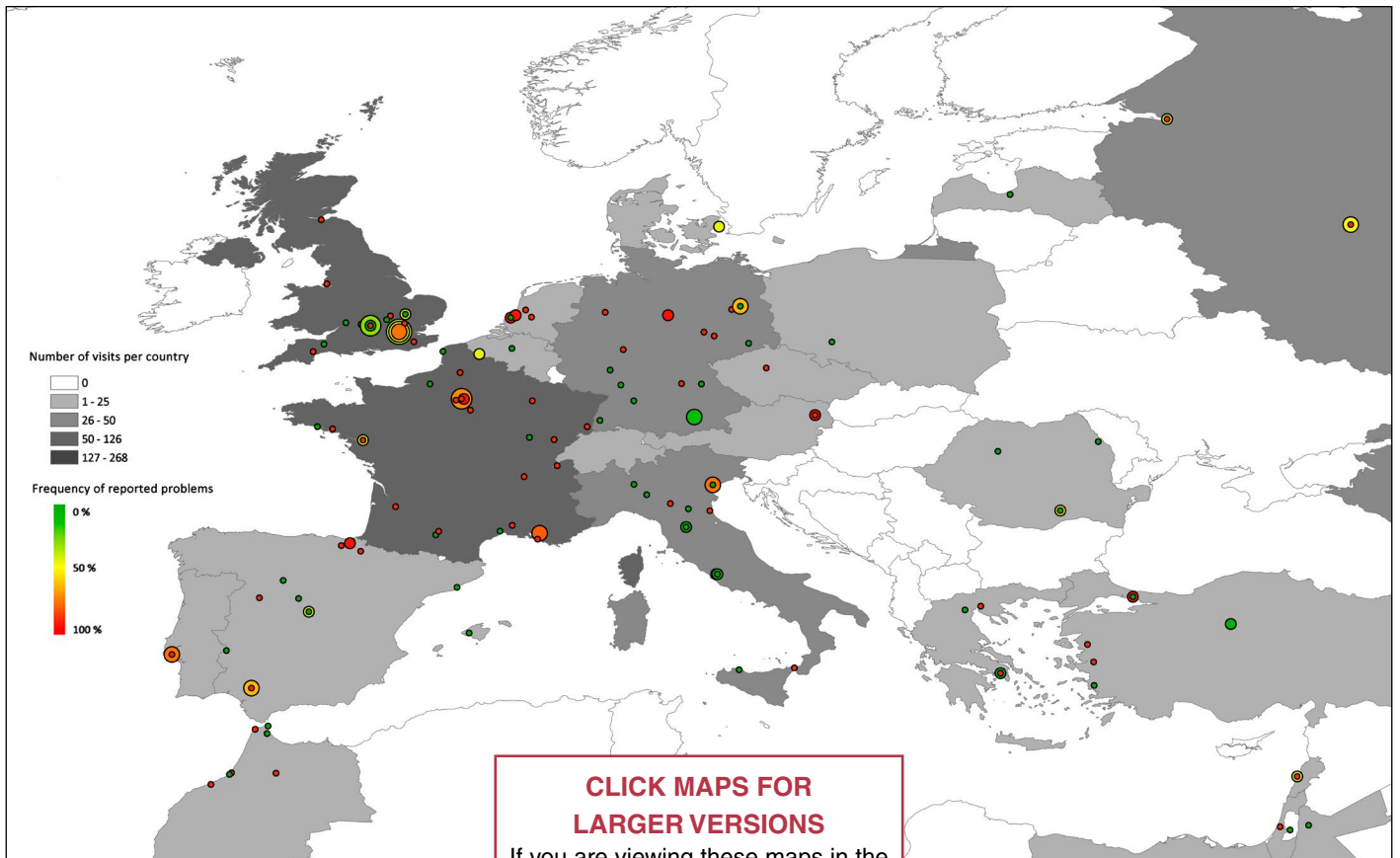


Figure 1a. Map of sites visited by the 2002–2014 fellows. Darker country colors indicate higher frequencies of research site visits. Circle size corresponds to the number of visits at a particular site. The color scale indicates the frequency of reported problems.



CLICK MAPS FOR LARGER VERSIONS
 If you are viewing these maps in the PDF version of this document and in a web browser, clicking on them will link to larger images.

Figure 1b. Details of sites visited in Europe.

The Fellows' Reports and the Research Sites

The 177 reports included in this study were produced by fellows from 57 U.S. institutions. The largest number of fellows came from Harvard University (29.82%, n=17), followed by Columbia University (22.81%, n=13), the University of Chicago and Yale (each with 19.3%, n=11), and UC Berkeley (15.79%, n=9, Table 1). The majority of fellows among all award years self-identified as historians (50.85%, n=90), or a specialization of the discipline (8.47%, n=15). The next most commonly reported disciplines were art history (8.47%, n=15), musicology (4.52%, n=8), anthropology (3.95%, n=7), and literature (3.39%, n=6) (Table 2).

Fellows visited several sites repeatedly over the 13 program years examined. The British Library in London was the most frequently visited site (n=27), followed by the Library of Congress (n=15), and several other national and university archives. Fellows faced challenges related to access, discovery, and/or interpersonal dynamics at nearly half (48 percent) of all sites visited. For sites that were visited multiple times over the years, researchers continued to face similar challenges.

Geographic distribution of research site visits varies considerably by award year (Figure 2). However, certain world regions are consistently over-represented (e.g., Western Europe and/or North America) and under-represented (e.g., the Middle East). The under-representation of certain regions such as Latin America and Africa may result from the relocation of records during European colonization, and is not a reliable indication of the researchers' geographic interests.



Elise Bonner 2012 Fellow

PhD Candidate, Musicology, Princeton University

I am currently completing a dissertation on Catherine the Great and the origins of Russian opera in late eighteenth-century St. Petersburg.

In 2012, I received CLIR's Mellon Fellowship for Dissertation Research in Original Sources. This grant provided me the opportunity to spend a year in Russia conducting original research in state archives, public libraries, and the Central Library of the Mariinsky Theater. My unique archival findings allow me to engage critically with contradictory scholarship on the individuals and institutions of Russian court opera, starting with Catherine the Great. For nearly two hundred years, Catherine has provided a battleground for scholars, and prejudices against Catherine have shaped music history by stripping the empress of knowledge, taste, and power. In my work, I rely on

archival documents as much as possible with the aim of rethinking and reconstructing the Russian court theater under Catherine from the ground up.

The research that I conducted as a CLIR fellow has come to define my scholarly identity, and I have no doubt that it has helped me stand out in subsequent fellowship competitions and on the job market. This fall, I will start at Columbia University as a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow. Being a CLIR fellow has also provided me an interdisciplinary network of colleagues and a research mentor for my time in Russia, which was particularly beneficial as I was the only student in my department conducting research abroad. I benefited greatly from our regular video conference calls on research methods, data management systems, overcoming obstacles in the field, and building relationships with local specialists. These conversations have remained with me, and they continue to shape the work that I do today.

HOME INSTITUTION	N	HOME INSTITUTION	N
Binghamton University	1	University of California, Irvine	1
Boston University	1	University of California, Los Angeles	6
Brown University	6	University of California, Riverside	1
Columbia University	13	University of California, San Diego	2
Cornell University	1	University of California, Santa Barbara	2
CUNY Graduate Center	1	University of California, Santa Cruz	1
Duke University	4	University of Chicago	11
Emory University	4	University of Florida	1
Florida State University	1	University of Illinois at Chicago	1
George Washington University	2	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	2
Georgetown University	3	University of Indiana	1
Harvard University	17	University of Kansas	1
Indiana University-Bloomington	1	University of Maryland, College Park	4
Johns Hopkins University	4	University of Massachusetts-Amherst	2
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	3	University of Miami	1
Maxwell School of Syracuse University	1	University of Michigan	5
New York University	6	University of Minnesota	2
Northwestern University	1	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	3
Princeton University	1	University of Pennsylvania	6
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey	2	University of Pittsburgh	1
Stanford University	3	University of Southern California	2
Temple University	1	University of Texas at Austin	4
The Ohio State University	2	University of Virginia	2
Tufts University	3	University of Washington	2
Tulane University	1	University of Wisconsin-Madison	5
University of Arizona	1	Washington University in St. Louis	2
University of California, Berkeley	10	Yale University	11
University of California, Davis	1		
		Total	177

Table 1. Home institutions of all fellows, 2002–2014.

DISCIPLINE	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total	%
African American Studies and American Studies	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.56
African History	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	5	2.82
American Studies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1.13
Anthropology	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	7	3.95
Architectural History	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	1.69
Art and Architectural History	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	1.13
Art History	2	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	3	15	8.47
Chinese History	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.56
Cinema and Media Studies	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1.13
Cinema and Media Studies/Cinema Studies	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.56
Communication	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.56
Comparative Literature	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2.26
East Asian Languages and Cultures	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1.13
English	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.56
Ethnomusicology	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.56
European History	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.56
Geography	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.56
Hispanic Literature and Linguistics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	1.13
History	2	5	1	7	5	7	8	9	10	12	11	4	9	90	50.85
History of Science	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.56
Interdisciplinary	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	1.69
Jewish Studies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.56
Latin American History	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1.13
Literature	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3	2	7	3.95
Music	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	3	1.69
Musicology	1	2	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	8	4.52
Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.56
Performance Studies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1.13
Political Science	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	4	2.26
Religion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.56
Theater	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.56
Theory and Criticism of Art and Architecture	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.56
Total	10	13	11	14	11	13	9	16	14	15	18	16	17	177	

Table 2. Number of fellows by self-reported discipline of study.

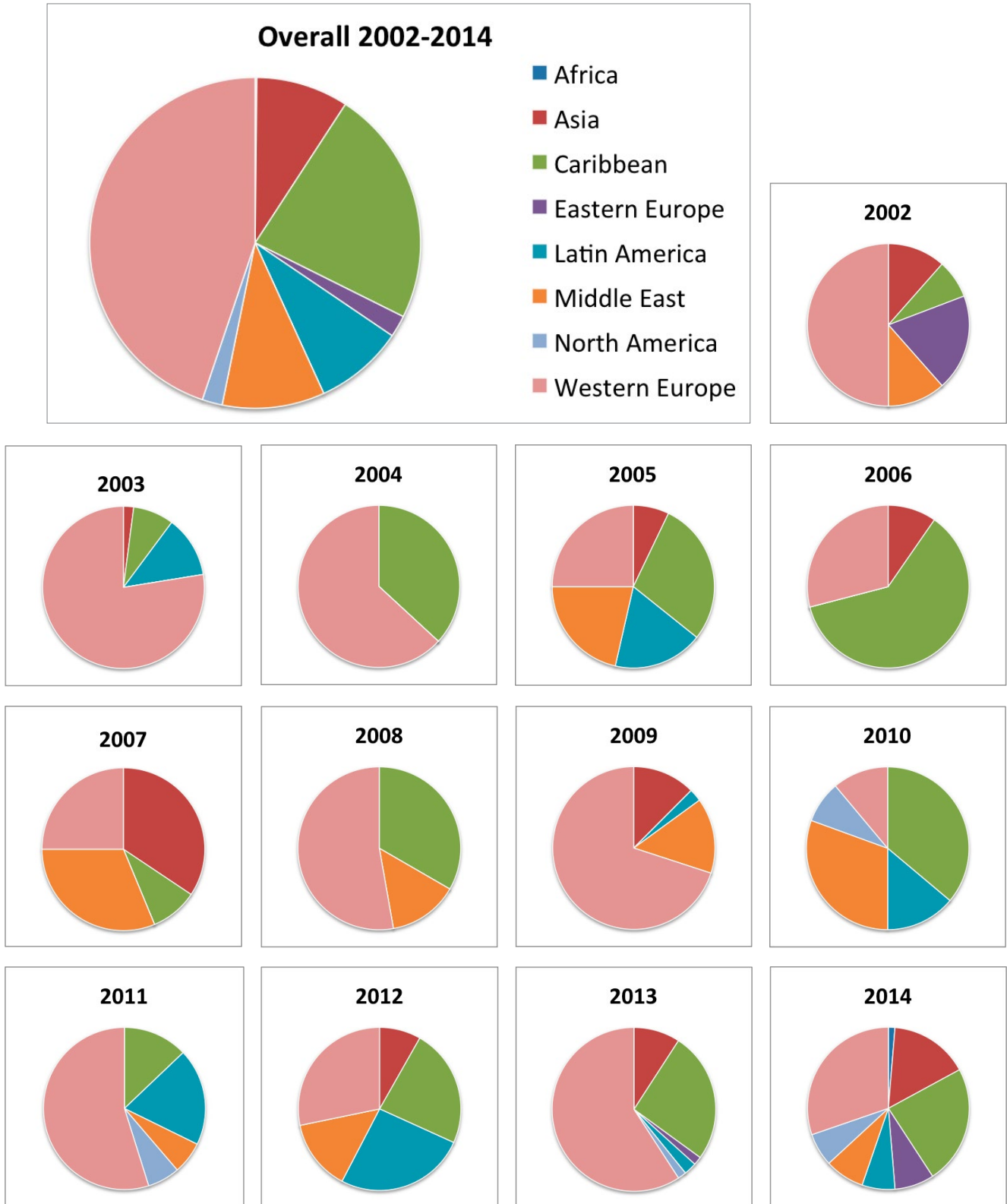


Figure 2. Geographic distribution of sites visited, overall and by award year.

On average, fellows visited 10 distinct research locations during their award year. However, there is considerable variation among the numbers of sites visited by each fellow (Figure 3). There is also a slight increase in the average number of sites visited by the fellows since 2002. Ascertaining the reasons for this trend is beyond the scope of this report. Possibilities may include increased competition among researchers, prompting the development of more complex dissertation projects, or the increased web presence of many institutions and their collections. Other factors could include an increased emphasis on multidisciplinary and transnational research, or expectations that a greater quantity of original source material should be used in dissertation research. Although researchers cited inadequate finding aids as one of their most common problems, as discussed below, the availability of greater numbers of high-level finding aids may be allowing researchers to ask more complex questions or to plan more thorough data gathering.

The types of sites fellows visited remained fairly consistent between 2002 and 2014. Most fellows conducted their research at archives and libraries, followed by a much smaller proportion of museums, archaeological sites, and private collections (Figure 4). The most commonly reported material types studied were manuscripts, books, administrative papers, and ephemera (Figure 5). However, for nearly a third of the research site visits fellows did not report the type of material studied. There are no significant temporal trends in the types of materials fellows used, but it appears that photos and court documents may be gradually increasing in popularity as data sources.

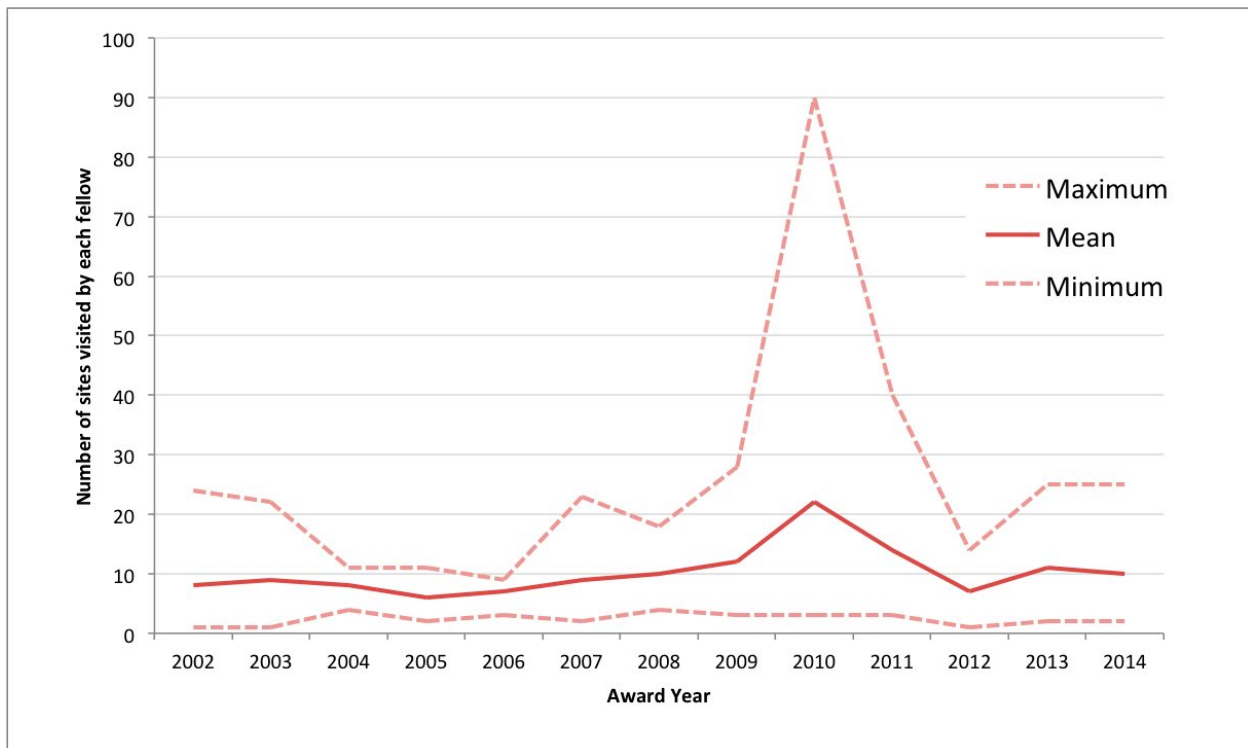


Figure 3. Number of sites visited per fellow by award year.

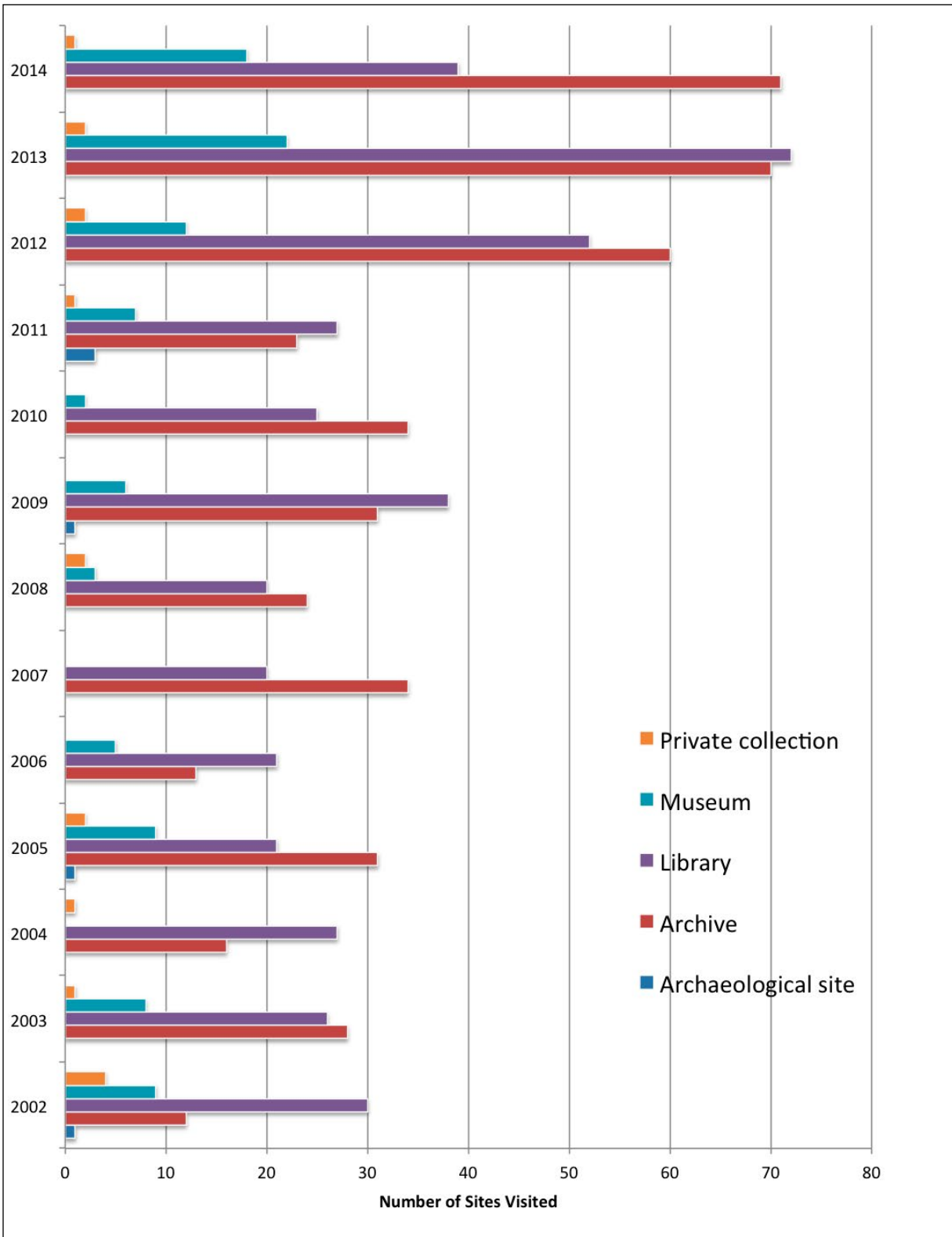


Figure 4. Summary of the types of sites fellows visited by year.

Themes from the Reports

The fellows reported problems at almost half (48 percent) of all sites visited. Many problems were relatively minor, although some presented serious obstacles to research. Despite the high frequency of challenges, fellows described their research experiences in positive terms overall. The most frequently encountered problems related to access such as reproduction policies, fees, and inadequate finding aids (Figure 6). Fellows also routinely commented on their interactions with staff, citing both positive and negative exchanges. Fellows often attributed negative interactions to inadequate staff training, especially

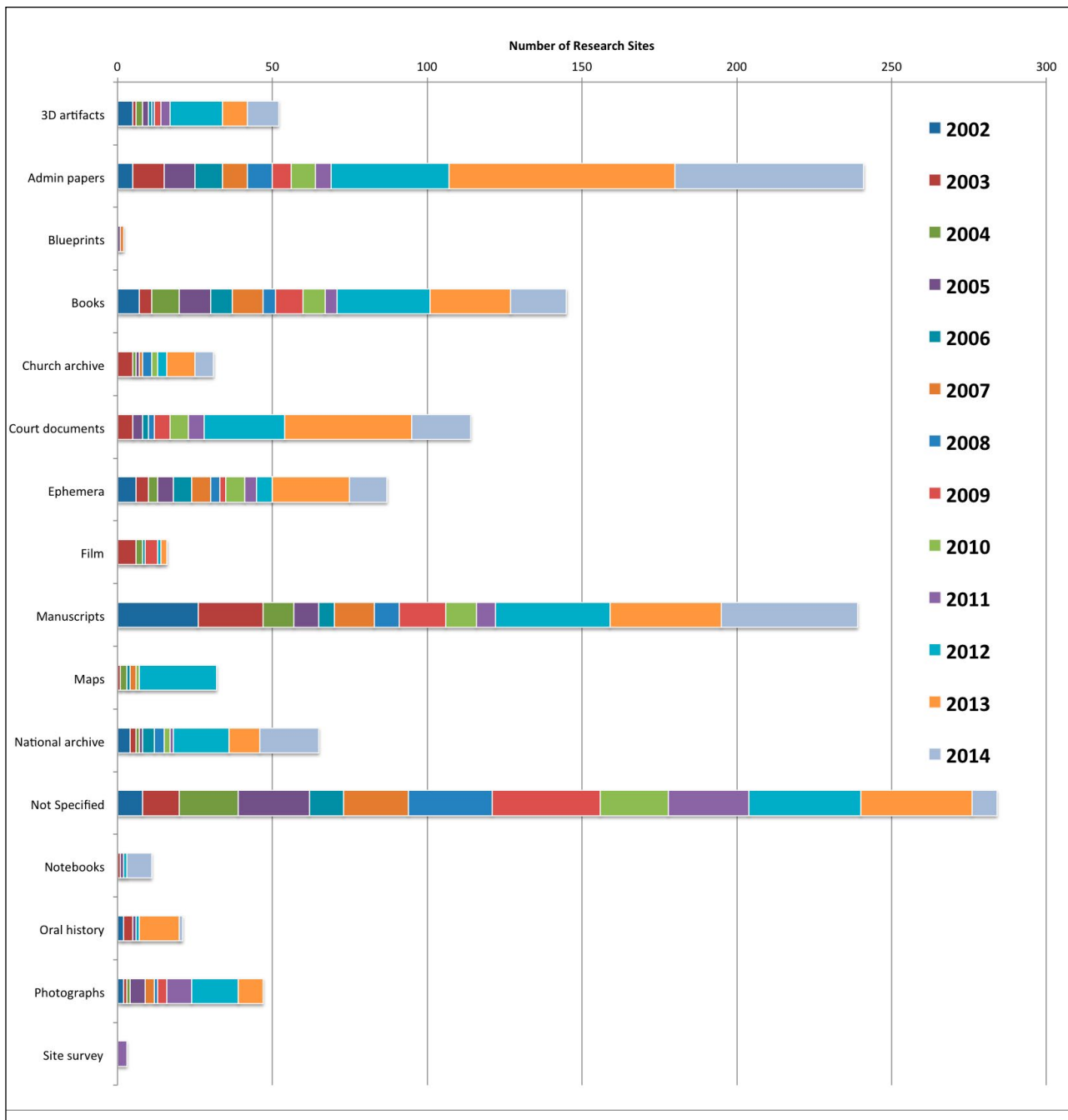


Figure 5. Material types fellows used by award year.

in understanding the goals of scholarly work in archives and the associated needs of researchers. The uneven expertise of staff prompted many fellows to stress the importance of getting to know staff during research visits and participating in the culture of the institution.

Some institutions do an excellent job of catering to the needs of researchers who use them, while others are not necessarily geared toward scholars and their projects. The relationship between researchers and institution staff is crucial, as are the intellectual and social networks formed among scholars who meet while doing archival research.

In the following sections, we discuss some of the prominent themes in the fellows' reports. This is by no means a comprehensive summary of every issue, but we hope that it will provoke conversation among information professionals and among faculty who advise graduate students conducting this kind of research.

Barriers to Access and the Research Process

Barriers to access can take many forms—bureaucratic sluggishness, politically motivated restrictions, limited hours, or unavailability of collections. Sometimes barriers take the form of fees or expectations that a visitor will offer gifts to staff in return for help. The cost of living in an expensive city such as London can also strain a graduate student's travel budget. After gaining access to a collection, graduate students can also encounter hurdles in the form of hard-to-find materials or problems with managing their research data.

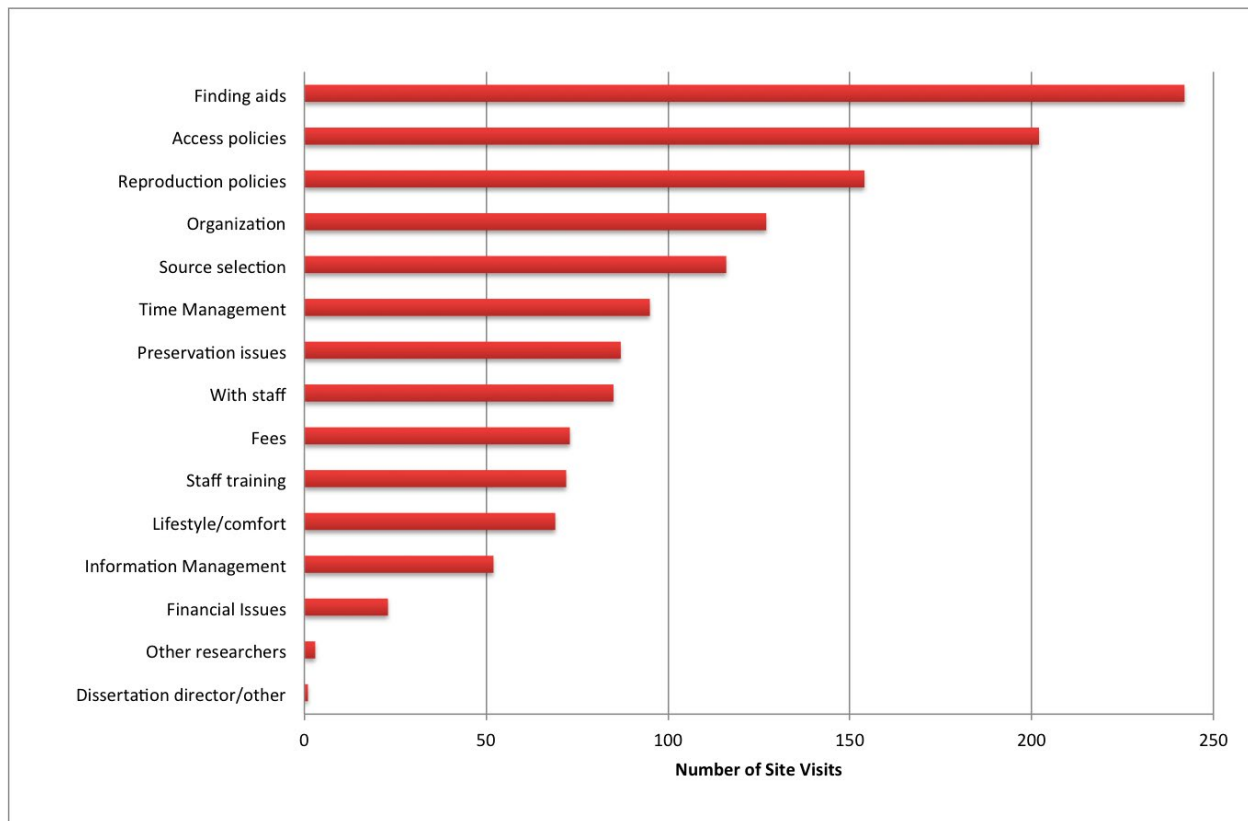


Figure 6. Types of problems fellows reported based on 991 total site visits, 2002-2014 cohorts.

Bureaucracy and Politics

Fellows reported having to jump through many time-consuming hoops just to get in the door of some institutions. Many archives require letters of introduction for admission. Two fellows complained about one archive in Vietnam, “famous within the field for its bureaucracy,” according to one, where request forms from foreign researchers “must be approved not only by the director but faxed to the headquarters of the national archive system in Hanoi for approval.” One fellow complained that at this archive, “Archivists are state employees whose orientation toward the researcher is that of a gatekeeper of information.” At a state archive in India, “Every photocopy order had to be approved by three different officers, none of whom came to work on the same day.” A library in Denmark never responded to one fellow’s initial request for permission to visit, and required multiple letters of permission from another fellow.

Sometimes political tensions also made access tricky to negotiate. At a “conservative Argentinean institution,” a fellow reported that “the only way I was able to obtain access to the collections was to refrain ... from appearing too academic or critical.” One fellow working in a national archive found that requests could be denied “because the authorities decide they are too politically sensitive.” In France, several fellows worked with materials that were *sous d erogation*, or held “under derogation” —subject to a delay in access for up to a hundred years after the events documented—owing to their political sensitivity. Documents under derogation require a special request process and a letter of reference. One fellow had to make two applications after discovering that his initial request had been too broad. In archives in Pakistan, another fellow found that access to individual documents was granted on a case-by-case basis, and that the staff, although friendly, forbade her from even taking notes on some materials.

Occasionally other motives fueled denial of access, as in the case of a museum curator who “frequently barred access to documents on which she [herself] hoped to publish.” Fortunately, this kind of experience was not typical. But at times, library and archives staff members were inclined to deny access based on an incorrect assessment of a fellow’s research. In a German university library, one fellow reported, “I was almost denied access to the architectural drawing collection, because the archivist, unaccustomed to American dissertations, was not convinced by my topic.”

Access to private collections, though often rewarding, can be even more idiosyncratic than for archives and libraries. One fellow had to wait two months before being allowed to view the historic papers in the collection of a prominent individual in the United Kingdom who “requires personal application from interested researchers which he often denies for inscrutable reasons.” Sometimes a suspicious attitude on the part of archival staff is a legacy of bad experiences with previous researchers: a fellow studying the Native American cultural record commented that “Distrust of outsiders is often very high, and for good reason, since earlier researchers have misrepresented their collections and histories, or absconded with invaluable documents and material culture items.”

Discovery

Once a scholar gains access to an archive, the next step is to begin discovering materials. Often this process begins far ahead of actual travel, if catalogs and finding aids are available online. In their 2012 report on the changing research practices of historians, Jennifer Rutner and Roger C. Schonfeld found that an increasing number of historians are using online finding aids to make their research trips more strategic by locating relevant collections before they even begin to travel (2012, 10). The Mellon fellows' experiences reflect this pattern. If online, even a very basic finding aid in the form of a simple PDF or Word document can be searched for relevant keywords. Knowing where the relevant collections are can save a researcher a great deal of time and make travel planning much easier, freeing up more time to spend examining the collections themselves.

But many collections remain only partially cataloged, or are only described in offline finding aids—if finding aids exist at all. Museums, private collections, and even some archives that fellows visited lacked catalogs. In many cases, fellows who were comfortable with online catalogs at their university libraries had to adjust to using paper finding aids (a few of which were handwritten). Cataloging and creating metadata are expensive and time-consuming processes, and many sites lack the funds to hire qualified staff to catalog the collection and produce finding aids.

Locating the right finding aid, learning to use it correctly, and searching it for relevant materials can take up a great deal of a researcher's time, and can delay the process if not taken into account beforehand. Sometimes an idiosyncratic finding aid system can actually facilitate discovery. At one archive in Germany, a fellow found an initially confusing array of multiple catalogs, but discovered they provided "a virtually failsafe system" for finding early German books. But many fellows found uneven levels of cataloging, with some collections better described than others, which made the amount of time required for an archival visit unpredictable.

There are, of course, limits to even the best catalogs and finding aids, and no single system will ever match the needs of every present and future scholar. The contents of a collection may interest a very different audience than the one for which it was originally collected, organized, and described (more on this below). Even fellows who had generally positive experiences with finding aids still found it useful to adopt what one of them called a "brute force" approach, "requesting any ... collection or microfilm that seemed to pertain to the era and cultural milieu in question, and then methodically paging through it to see if it might contain something relevant." Finding aids may reduce the need for this kind of methodical reading of materials, but they will never eliminate it entirely. Hence, it is crucial for graduate students to budget extra time in their research plans and communicate effectively with library and archives staff.

Several fellows described interactions with well-meaning librarians and archivists who themselves had a hard time locating under-cataloged or uncataloged collections. Conversely, a knowledgeable archivist or librarian can often make up for the failings of

an incomplete finding aid. In the words of a fellow who struggled to find visual materials (often minimally cataloged), “nothing beats a real live archivist who knows her collections inside out, who is familiar with both the larger historical significance of those collections and the range of scholarly interest in those collections—and most crucially, who will engage with you about the big questions of your dissertation rather than just handing you what you ask for.” A fellow visiting a small museum whose collections were uncataloged reported that the curator “gave me unlimited access to the collection, shared many personal insights, and allowed me to scan and copy as many items as necessary.” Her work in this collection proved to be “some of the most interesting and fruitful of the year.” Communication of this kind is a crucial part of the research experience, and can make or break a visit to the archives.

Missing Collections

Even after negotiating admission to an institution and consulting finding aids, a visiting scholar may find that some collections are unavailable. At institutions ranging from libraries in Egypt to archives in Trinidad and Tobago to a large library in New York, several fellows were dismayed to find that certain materials could not be located. Some fellows noted problems with apparent theft, but the nature and extent of the problem is unclear.

Preservation issues were not the most common problem reported, but made access more difficult. Some fellows arrived in archives to find documents crumbling, moldy, or otherwise falling apart. At a severely underfunded library in Detroit, one fellow “encountered many important sources that would clearly not be available for use much longer unless there was a dramatic effort to salvage them. ...



Alex Borucki 2008 Fellow

Associate Professor, History Dept., UC Irvine

The picture at left, taken without my knowledge by a friend in the National Archive in Buenos Aires in 2009, visually epitomizes my year of work in the archives of Argentina and Uruguay during my CLIR Mellon fellowship. My work was rooted in the discipline of a routine, which started each night before going to the archive. I would make a list of the boxes of documents I wanted to recall and make sure the batteries of my camera were charged. In the morning, I would head to the archive and begin requesting documents, taking notes on some of them, selecting some to photograph digitally, having a lunch break (hopefully with a colleague; I met some of my best cohort-colleagues while I was on

the fellowship), and then coming back to the reading room to finish with the notes and picture-taking. Once I returned home, I would rest and then begin to download the pictures and organize the material in the computer. If I missed organizing the pictures, my next morning was dreadful.

The discipline of this simple day-by-day routine became the basis from which I wrote a book, several articles, and the proposal for my second English-language book. After the fellowship ended, my research routine became a writing routine, during the last eighteenth months of my life as grad student. My experience with the CLIR Mellon fellowship went beyond finishing the dissertation; it helped me organize the materials with which I would work for the long run, and helped form questions with which, seven years later, I still grapple in my academic career.

I felt the largely unwritten history of a major American city disintegrating between my fingers.”

Materials that are digitized or otherwise reproduced can enhance access or pose problems for researchers who want to consult the originals. At least 18 fellows lamented the practice, common at many archives and libraries, of microfilming rare materials and allowing access only to the microfilms, not the originals. A fellow who found surrogates harder to read and interpret than originals stated that “the replacement of original archival material with surrogates—both microfilm and online digital files—is making research more complicated, not less so.” In some cases fellows were allowed to request the original materials, but this required time and another step.

Microfilm and more modern forms of imaging such as scanning can preserve delicate materials while still allowing some level of access. But the quality of the images and of the microfilm readers themselves can vary. One fellow encountered everything from high-resolution color microfilms to poor-quality (sometimes melted) black-and-white film, which she had to view on broken readers. Even the well-made microfilm in one French library proved insufficient for her research needs. It took her “about a month and much to-and-fro negotiation” to see an original manuscript crucial to her dissertation topic.

Interestingly, given the growth of digitization and the value many fellows saw in digitized sources, several stressed the value of *not* digitizing everything, or of selecting materials to be digitized with greater care. One fellow commented that “the choices of materials to be made available is based on frequency of use; the more often a book is asked for, the higher this book ranks on the list of books to be included in the ‘digital library.’ But one of the tasks of a researcher (in the humanities) is to find obscure, overlooked, discarded materials.” This fellow saw a danger in facilitating access to the most frequently requested materials rather than to the lesser known sources that can lead a historian to new and unexpected insight. Another wrote,

The final thought or suggestion I have for archivists and librarians is, perhaps, a meek plea not to digitize everything. I recognize some of the many, many positives of digitization: democratization of historical work (you don’t need the money you once did to travel to an archive; this opens up research to new demographics, and perhaps younger students—why wait until college to do archival research?), better preservation of material, federal and private grants... But I honestly hope that in my career and in my students’ careers, international archival work will still be one of the requirements—and greatest pleasures—of the job. What happens to French history if you can research the whole book without ever leaving your desk in [location omitted]?

Documenting Findings

For the next stage of archival research—documenting findings—fellows used a combination of note-taking, transcription, cameras, and

the institution's photo-reproduction services, where available. Of fellows from all award years, 58 percent reported using a digital camera in their research, a practice that has increased considerably since 2002. Rutner and Schonfeld call the increasing use of digital cameras and scanners "the single most significant shift in research practices among historians, and one with as-yet largely unrecognized implications for the work of historical research and its support" (2012, 11). Photography can save much time by allowing the scholar to capture a document's image to examine later, at home.

Many libraries and archives restrict the use of digital cameras but offer their own photo-reproduction services. This may result in high-quality images but can also be prohibitively expensive, particularly for a graduate student on a limited budget. One fellow who worked in several archives in Portugal found that "a single image [could] cost as much as thirty-five dollars." This is an extreme example, but some of the most visited institutions garnered numerous complaints about fees.

Photography is a boon to the scholar without the time to read or transcribe every document in a collection. But it can also introduce its own set of problems for information management. Fellows who were allowed to take large numbers of digital photographs, or scan many documents, sometimes found themselves with a mass of image files with insufficient metadata about where the images originated and what they represented. One fellow who rejoiced at being able to "do 4 times as much per day at each archive as a result of being able to snap pages that [she] would peruse later" also remarked, "I found that even if I let a few days pass, it became immensely difficult to go back and label these photos with any accuracy."

In the words of another fellow, "It can be tempting to simply photograph large batches of documents without reviewing the contents in much detail, but postponing that reading limits the actual research process, as it can suggest new avenues for investigation." The most successful approach was often a combination of photography, detailed note-taking while the specifics of the materials were still fresh in the fellow's mind, and, for some, writing parts of the dissertation while still engaged in archival research.

The Sense of an Audience: Archives and their Patrons

The fellows heaped praise on many institutions for the expert way in which they catered to researchers. At a number of sites, archivists and librarians offered high levels of access to researchers, helped to locate hard-to-find materials, suggested undiscovered resources, and made numerous positive contributions to fellows' projects.

Some fellows, however, discovered that archives do not always have a sense of a scholarly audience. This is especially the case with small institutions rarely visited by scholars. Such institutions may not expect anyone to consult their archives, which may be housed in a disorganized room containing stacks of paper. One French museum's archive comprised collections of material "stored more or less randomly in a large walk-in closet." The staff did not include

an archivist. The archive of the city hall of one large American city turned out to house documents “chaotically arranged on open bookshelves,” with missing or crumbling pages. The fellow who tried to access probate records was charged \$15 a day for three records at a time, a price that “reflects the fact that most of the people who come in to request inventories are probate lawyers, not history graduate students.” Some fellows reported a sense of excitement at being the first to examine a set of documents at a little-known archive, but not all were equally upbeat about the experience.

Nor are archivists at all institutions always trained to facilitate historical research. At a British humane society that was “simply not set up for researchers,” according to one fellow, the part-time archivist “did not believe that their material ... could be useful.” In national or court archives, archivists may be considered civil servants first, a situation that contributes to some of the bureaucratic hurdles described above. One fellow learned that the head of an archive in Guyana had no actual archival training, because the position “is seen as a senior public service position and it is usually filled by someone who has ... worked in any of several government ministries for a significant amount of time.” Preservation issues worried a fellow who visited a registrar’s office in Jamaica, where “gross mishandling of historical documents” was the rule because of a lack of trained archive staff.

Some institutions have a distinct sense of their preferred or ideal visitor, one that does not always include all scholars engaged in historical research. An ecclesiastical archive in Mexico’s Yucatán Peninsula proved difficult to access unless the visitor demonstrated “respect for, if not membership in, the Catholic faith.” One fellow complained that the holdings of two institutions were geared more toward genealogists than historians or other scholars. Another



Amy Brady 2011 Fellow

Grant Writer, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

The CLIR Mellon fellowship allowed me invaluable time to explore the Federal Theatre Project (FTP) archive, wherein I learned not only what happened during the FTP’s brief existence, but why. This deep-level knowledge has allowed me to make important contributions to the field of theatre history that, in turn, open new avenues of research for current and future scholars. The fellowship also gave me time to consider more fully the role of the scholar when researching original-source materials. As such, I’m not merely a “recover-er” of facts and dates—I’m a storyteller, seeking to build a coherent narrative out of

those facts. Today I am employed by one of the most prestigious performing-arts companies in the world, where one of my main roles is to “tell the story” of how the company was formed, and why it makes its artistic choices. To do this job well, I draw from—and build upon—the skills I developed as a CLIR fellow.

Thanks to the CLIR fellowship, I am also someone who has spent more time in the FTP archive than just about anyone. I’m therefore frequently asked to give talks at colleges and universities around the country about the FTP and its relation to contemporary theatre. During these talks I do my best to instill in students not only a fascination for the FTP but a desire to conduct original-source research of their own. In this small way, I aim to pay forward the career-changing opportunities the CLIR fellowship afforded me.

thought that a prominent library's policies prioritized exhibitions over research, with the aim of getting as many "warm bodies" into the library as possible. A fellow who used the archives of the estate of an American artist made many discoveries, but contended with a lack of organization because the estate, organized as a business rather than an educational institution, was geared more to "the art market" than to scholars of the artist's work.

Creating a Scholarly Community around the Archive

Fellows consistently reported the strong positive impact of a local scholarly community. Other scholars can provide suggestions for research, valuable insights into how libraries and archives work, and much-needed moral support.² Such contact is especially important in unfamiliar surroundings or in archives where finding aids are scarce or nonexistent. Through contact with other scholars, fellows were better able to navigate the intricacies of archival research and access, find the right staff person to ask for advice, and stave off the feelings of isolation that can accompany a solitary trip abroad.

As one fellow noted of her stay in Russia, "In a research culture almost completely devoid of reliable online or published information ... word-of-mouth advice was a precious resource." Another fellow reported that an informal but well-established weekly meet up exists in Moscow for American graduate students visiting the archives. This led her, in her words, to "the very Soviet idea that the knowledge of the collective is supreme."

Social and intellectual interaction among researchers can be as simple as conversation during lunch and coffee breaks. One fellow established this practice almost accidentally. During 20-minute rest breaks he found that other researchers began joining him, which led to an important lead for his project. Another fellow praised a famous research library not only for its strong collections, excellent finding aids, and knowledgeable staff, but also for its outdoor cafe and weekly coffee and tea hour, which facilitated friendly, informal conversation among researchers.

Several fellows found even more extensive forms of intellectual community by joining local institutions during their research trips. One was invited to participate in a graduate seminar at one of her research sites, and had very positive experiences working with local scholars. Another fellow joined the historical society in the South African city where she conducted her research. Through that group she got to know a librarian from a library that proved important to her project. Another fellow, whose Mellon trip took her to London, joined the Institute for Historical Research, whose weekly seminars allowed her to share ideas with fellow graduate students and make connections with historians in her field.

² Rutner and Schonfeld also noticed this in their interviews with historians, observing that "Interviewees sometimes noted having made connections with other scholars in their subfield at an archive and even observing and learning from how other scholars work through a collection, take notes, and write" (2012, 38).

Giving Something Back: The Relationship between Archives and Scholars

The scholar/archivist or scholar/librarian relationship is one of the most important themes in fellows' reports. For fellows who were welcomed into a community of scholars, this relationship can be a reciprocal, even a symbiotic one. The worth of a good librarian or archivist, who understands both the collection and the visiting scholar's research project, is inestimable. Several of the fellows were motivated to return the favor by sharing the fruits of their research. They did this by helping to catalog collections they worked with, or giving the institution copies of the photographs or transcripts of documents they had produced while there. In the words of one fellow, "I did not expect to be creating archives this year, but such digitization turned out to be a minimal burden for me, and a notable gesture for the repositories I used."

If a researcher is already digitizing large numbers of materials, offering a set of copies can be a simple but effective way to thank the library or archive while also benefiting future scholars. One fellow, pleased to discover that many German libraries were digitizing their holdings, "thanked the archivists by presenting the material [he] had either photographed or transcribed in a CD." This strategy also worked for another fellow who offered to photograph documents in a Russian archive that were unavailable on microfilm. She was able to get around a restrictive duplication policy by presenting the archives with CDs of the images. "It is ... satisfying to know," she wrote, "that if the originals are damaged, they now have a back up."

The fellow noted above, who had initial problems with the organization of an artist's estate, ended up working extensively with the estate to improve the situation. Her document scans were primarily intended to facilitate her own research, but she eventually turned this collection into a digital database that also benefited the archive, which hired an intern to help with the process. "While building a digital archive was, for me, motivated by scholarly purpose," she wrote afterward, "for the Estate, it meant something else: the need for a database of the artist's work for promotion in galleries, museums and with collectors."

Other fellows worked so extensively with particular collections that they ended up helping to catalog them. One expressed the hope of helping to create a future finding aid for the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, where she worked with an archivist who had just completed an "astounding" finding aid for a relevant collection. She also helped an archivist in Rwanda catalog videos. Another fellow produced a catalog for a collection in a national archive in Uruguay.

Publication of a scholar's archival research can benefit both the scholar's career and the archives that fostered the discovery. A special collections library in Philadelphia helped one fellow photograph manuscripts and enabled her (thanks to a non-restrictive copyright policy) to publish the resulting images. She found that this also allowed her to "simultaneously promot[e]" the library's



Daniel Domingues da Silva 2007 Fellow

Assistant Professor, Dept. of History, University of Missouri, Columbia

The CLIR Mellon fellowship awarded to me in 2007 played a key role in my research and professional career. I used the fellowship

to explore the origins of Africans coerced into the nineteenth-century slave trade from Angola, then the largest supplier of slaves to the Americas. Historians understood the region's role in the traffic, but they were less clear about the inland origins of the slaves. I proposed to examine registers of slaves and liberated Africans available in Angolan and Portuguese archives to trace the origins of these individuals. Courtesy of the fellowship, I spent one year between Luanda and Lisbon examining relevant records, which allowed me to estimate, for the first time, the

size and distribution of slaves leaving Angola by ethnolinguistic groups.

During this time, I was fortunate to connect with historians in the field and exchange ideas. Further, the fellowship helped me secure additional funding from institutions, such as the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, which was crucial given the decline in value of the U.S. dollar during the 2008 subprime crisis. I used the data I collected to collaborate in international research projects, such as African Origins, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. In turn, this research enabled me to apply for positions in a very competitive market. I am now completing my first book with data collected during the fellowship term and will go to tenure next year. It is essential to encourage young scholars, and to fund early and exciting research ideas that have a beneficial snowball effect. Thank you indeed to CLIR Mellon!

holdings—benefiting herself, the library, and future researchers.

While cooperation may not be possible in all cases, we would nonetheless encourage scholars to consider such an arrangement with the archives they visit. Small institutions that lack the staff or funds to perform extensive cataloging or digitization efforts can benefit greatly from receiving a copy of a visitor's scans or photographs, or gain useful information about a collection's contents from a scholar who has worked closely with them. We do not, however, mean to suggest that graduate students should take on the role of unpaid volunteer labor—particularly when graduate students at many universities already contribute so much underpaid and undervalued labor in the form of teaching. Nor are we suggesting that a visiting scholar can substitute for a trained cataloger of rare materials. However, the Mellon fellows' reports demonstrate that the products of a scholar's research can be beneficial both for the scholar and for the archives, libraries, and museums that enabled the research in the first place.

Summary of Findings

Several problems were common to the fellows' research experiences:

- Researcher expectations for speedy service, extensive cataloging, and unrestricted access do not match the realities of many cultural memory institutions, such as insufficient funding to create finding aids, limited hours and staff, and overarching bureaucracies.
- Graduate students were inadequately prepared for the false starts and unexpected developments of conducting research with original sources. They often underestimated the time and money needed to complete the project.

- Discovery is a key part of the research process, but tools for discovery are often incomplete or difficult to use, if they exist at all.
- Collections are developed for different audiences and may be described without considering the needs of researchers.
- Photography is becoming increasingly important to the research process, but many institutions forbid or place stringent limits on it.

That said, most of the problems fellows reported did not impede them so drastically that they were unable to carry out their research. In most cases, the inconveniences were minor or short-term, and the fellows found a workaround. At times, an apparent problem turned out to benefit a fellow's research. For example, several fellows reported that restricted hours of operation meant more time for organizing notes, writing up their discoveries, and taking rest breaks to preserve their energy for the long haul of a year's worth of travel. For others, eccentric or incomplete cataloging required consulting with archivists and librarians, leading to productive collaboration.

Fellows also discussed practices that were beneficial to their research experience, and which resulted in positive outcomes for their immediate research projects and long-term development as scholars:

- Regular communication between researchers and librarians or archivists can make a crucial difference in the success of a researcher's project, especially when not all information about a collection is contained within finding aids.
- Personal connections with other scholars during archival research trips are nearly always beneficial, both for the immediate project and for the larger trajectory of a researcher's career. Such connections can develop spontaneously, but institutions can help to encourage them.
- Serendipitous discovery was an important part of many fellows' research projects.
- Cultural memory institutions and scholars can both benefit from the research process. When shared with the institution, the products of a scholar's research—digitized images, deep knowledge of a collection, and promotion of an institution's holdings—can improve library and archival collections.

Recommendations for Libraries, Archives, and Museums

When cultural memory institutions encourage social and intellectual interaction among local and visiting scholars, both the scholars and the institutions can benefit. Helping to cultivate these scholarly networks can also increase an institution's visibility. In turn, allowing scholars access to original materials rather than surrogates (where preservation and security concerns permit such access) can greatly enhance scholars' understanding of the objects of their research.

Foster community among researchers.

Many of the problems that the fellows reported were caused or exacerbated by a lack of funds. It can be hard for a library or archive to provide adequate access to researchers if (as was the case with an archive in Alabama) “austerity measures” have entailed a reduced schedule and a smaller staff. Digitization, detailed finding aids, well-trained staff, pleasant reading rooms, efficient document-request systems: all of these require money to implement, and not every institution can afford them.

But a sense of community, as described above, is not necessarily expensive to foster. Organizing regular lunch or coffee breaks can encourage researchers to talk to one another. Organizing small events or symposia, if feasible, can bring local and visiting scholars together. Libraries and archives might consider following the example of a photography archive that asked a visiting fellow to give an informal brown-bag presentation to the staff—an invitation that made her feel part of the scholarly life of the institution and helped her think through her research.

An archivist or librarian, especially one who works closely with researchers and knows who is currently researching what, can also facilitate this scholarly community by recommending that a researcher talk to others in his or her area of interest. One fellow in Italy found that librarians at one institution in Rome kept track of visitors’ research topics and offered him a list of potential contacts. While there are definite privacy concerns with this approach, and while not every researcher will want to be contacted, library or archives staff might ask researchers if they are willing to be put in touch with other researchers working on similar topics.

Libraries and archives might also consider partnering with nearby institutes, historical societies, and other organizations that support archival researchers. If such an organization exists in an area, archivists and librarians could steer researchers toward it, or consider working with it to host talks or other events.

Allow access to physical artifacts where possible.

There are many preservation- and security-related reasons for offering access to a surrogate than to a rare or delicate original document. However, viewing a digital or microfilmed image of a document alone often will not fulfill a scholar’s purposes. Libraries and archives have the best understanding of their own collections and the issues involved with access to them. However, access policies should take into consideration the fact that many scholars will need to view original materials at least some of the time.

Recommendations for Graduate Programs and Advisors

It is incumbent on graduate programs in history and related disciplines to train students in the basic skills of archival research. These include reading a finding aid, taking reliable notes, and organizing the data amassed on archival trips. As Rutner and Schonfeld note, “PhD students reported significant uncertainty about their knowledge of research practices. They were not uniformly well-versed in [the] techniques necessary to research and write a dissertation and enter the profession” (2012, 45). Experienced scholars may also have considerable background knowledge about particular collections and their idiosyncrasies, knowledge that can and should be shared with scholars-in-training.

Give students a realistic picture of the research process before they begin visiting archives.

Fellows were often taken aback by unexpected delays during their research travels, whether from problems with access or from set-backs during the research process itself. Graduate advisors can help their students develop a clearer sense of what to expect the first time they visit an archive. They can offer practical suggestions for preparing in advance, coping with the unexpected, learning to use an unfamiliar collection, and using unavoidable downtime for writing.



Elizabeth A. Cecil 2013 Fellow

Postdoctoral Fellow, ERC Synergy Project: Asia Beyond the Boundaries, British Museum

The opportunity to pursue my dissertation research in India and gain access to original sources has significantly altered the trajectory of my work. My project focused on the development of sanctified spaces in medieval northwest India, and the use of these spaces as sites of community building for devotees of Śiva. Prior to commencing my CLIR Mellon fellowship, my sources were largely textual and reflected normative and primarily elite visions of what it meant to worship Śiva, how it was supposed to be done, and what kinds of people were involved. The opportunity to spend time engaging with places I knew only from brief mentions in texts, and to

explore new sites not present in the textual record, allowed me access to a rich material archive. I was able to see first-hand how built spaces, images, and inscriptions preserve traces of historical voices that are typically marginalized in texts and, though them, access alternative tellings of a religious history. The result has been a considerably more nuanced perspective of a religious landscape that is inspired by the diverse groups of people who lived it.

I am certain that this expanded scholarly vision will have implications for my work post-dissertation as well. Engaging with original sources has not only introduced me to new bodies of material evidence, but also challenged me to devise new ways to approach this evidence and ask different questions of the sources.

Collaborate with local university libraries and archives to hold workshops or symposia at which experienced scholars can share research suggestions with graduate students.

No single faculty member can answer or anticipate all the questions a graduate student might have about conducting archival research. But everyone could benefit if faculty from various departments who work with primary sources met with students to discuss research methods. A series of workshops, formal or informal, could cover topics including practical skills—taking photographs, keeping notes organized, and so on—that many of the fellows had to develop on the fly. Departments should also consider partnering with their university libraries and archives for programming of this type. Archivists and librarians can offer invaluable advice about navigating finding aids and understanding the sometimes opaque policies that govern special collections reading rooms.

Teach students how to handle delicate and rare materials.

The restrictive access policies that many of the fellows encountered reflect a perfectly valid wariness of inexperienced researchers who do not know how to handle a manuscript or rare book. Training in the proper handling of archival materials need not be elaborate, but should aim to produce scholars who can be trusted in a reading room. Librarians and archivists at a graduate student's local institution could assist with this training.

Encourage students to use social networks to further research.

Some libraries and archives require for admission a letter of recommendation or personal contact with a student's advisor. In other cases, faculty in a student's home department can put the student in touch with other scholars working in the same area, with library and archival staff, or with other scholars in the field who have worked with the same collections. Students should also be encouraged to contact local scholarly communities if they are traveling abroad for extended periods of time.

Teach students how to be "good citizen" researchers.

Researchers can build important bridges with archival institutions by offering to give something back. The skills of "good citizenship" should not be overlooked as part of a researcher's basic toolkit. In the words of one fellow, "patience and kindness could be forged into a true skeleton key—at any institution and with nearly anyone."

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Reflections of Program Mentors

Ryan Kashanipour and Elliott Shore, faculty mentors to the CLIR Mellon fellows, reflect on Jahnke's and Watson's analysis and offer additional insights from their experience working directly with the fellows.

Not in This Alone: Toward an Interdisciplinary Community of Scholars and a Critical Archival Practice

Elliott Shore, Executive Director, Association for Research Libraries

For the past seven years I have shared with Mark Dimunation the privilege of meeting and mentoring the CLIR Mellon fellows in this singular program. For the last five of those years, Ryan Kashanipour has been a constant presence for the fellows at our meetings and has led the synchronous sessions that hold the fellows together during their year of funded research. And in the past three years, Fenella France has added another dimension to how the fellows see the archive and collections, by offering a deeper understanding of the physicality of the items and the rich, often hidden, content within. In working with Christa Williford and Amy Lucko on this and other CLIR programs, I have been able to form a context for thinking about what happens with these fortunate young scholars as they transform into academics.

In this volume, Lori Jahnke and Amanda Watson have described the joys and concerns that these graduate students have expressed to us over the years through their written reports. What I would like to do in this short essay is to recount what I hear when they speak up in our in-person and online meetings.

There are two things that I would like to share from those conversations. The most important one is the sense I get from the doctoral students that they appreciate what a different model of attention and understanding the CLIR support structure provides to them: the notions that they are not in this alone, they are not competing with one another, and they are complete people, not just the sum of the academic honors they have earned. That, I think, is the genius of this program: the sense of belonging to a larger whole, the innate multidisciplinary component that stretches their thought processes, a place where the questions they might have but feel they cannot express in their home institutions find a forum. These include worries about the impact of their research on the institutions and people they

are studying, and the dilemmas of time—for research, writing, making copies of documents, or spending one’s time reading and taking notes in the archives, and for many, living in environments where they are facing problems that might have their roots in ideas based on gender/ethnic/racial/cultural assumptions. These real conversations happen in a space that has been created by this program, in the rhythms of the bookended meetings and regular synchronous sessions. The earnestness, the struggles, the joy of work discussed with peers develops a sense in these graduate students that cannot be duplicated on one campus in one’s closest cohort, embedded within one institution’s norms and disciplines.

The second thing I want to share is a focus on one aspect of this program, one that I have been thinking about since Mark Dimunation and I began gently sparring over issues about graduate students conducting research using original sources: the sometimes uncritical acceptance of the archive or the library as authoritative. That is a discussion we started in fall 2008 while sitting in the anteroom of the Library of Congress’s rare book reading room. This is a nagging question that reoccurs every year. It is one that is probably incompletely theorized in the seminars these students take and that our interventions with the fellows only partially address.

Emerging from coursework and exams—experiences crafted specifically to support their own intellectual development—it is natural that many of the fellows begin their research in eager anticipation of the exciting discoveries they will make in the field. At this stage students can be sorely tempted to approach archives, libraries, and museums as treasure troves that have been assembled in some magical way for their edification and viewing pleasure. It can be challenging for them to keep in mind that all collections are human creations born from happenstance, greed, politics, intention, and accident, and that the purpose of each of them is different and almost never about the uses to which scholars wish to put them. Why do we think of libraries, museums, and archives as value-free places dedicated to the pursuit and preservation of knowledge when we know they are bureaucracies, government agencies, and private collections that function along webs of connections that may be invisible but we know to be there?

The trick is to make researchers aware and wary but at the same time open to what they find, knowing that it is incomplete and that it tells a story that is as much about the collection and its practices as about the subject they are researching.

When the fellows first encounter new cultural institutions, the nature of the worlds they are entering is only partially visible—they enter them in a way that sometimes leaves at the door the critical faculties that they train on the artifacts they examine. Approaching institutions and collections critically is challenging for any young researcher—all of us need experience in the field to develop the necessary understanding, and we must get this experience on the job, not in a seminar. Nevertheless, encouraging a conversation of this sort may be in order, since engaging students in conversations about this can considerably accelerate their progress.

Why do we think of libraries, museums, and archives as value-free places dedicated to the pursuit and preservation of knowledge when we know they are bureaucracies, government agencies, and private collections that function along webs of connections that may be invisible but we know to be there?

The Jahnke and Watson analysis captures the variety of challenges graduate students face as they search for original sources: frustration with regulations, despair at what has been stolen or misplaced or never collected in the first place, being treated with suspicion, expected to understand local traditions that are not at all obvious to them. Sadly, sometimes one also hears a sense of entitlement that fuels these frustrations. It might be useful for us in this program to work toward getting the fellows to “own” their research projects, engaging them to anticipate problems before going into the field. We could help them understand that extracting the information they need may take a deeper understanding of how to interact with different cultures and how to get that one specific gatekeeper interested in wanting to help, and that this may be different for each interaction and archive.

I’d like to raise two other, related issues: the need for better career development support for fellows and those like them, and the potential to harness their talents in productive ways to address national and global issues in higher education. In my work with CLIR, I’ve had the opportunity to interact with several communities including the CLIR Postdoctoral Fellows Program. That group is slightly smaller than the community of Mellon fellows, but in many ways it faces the same issues highlighted in the Jahnke and Watson report. In fact, we have begun to have crossover—a few former Mellon dissertation fellows have become postdoctoral fellows. At the final meeting of each Mellon cohort we spend some time with the fellows talking about postgraduate-studies life, including the kinds of hybrid positions that CLIR postdocs have come to inhabit in the academy. This issue of life after graduate school has become a much bigger story in the past few years, as even the staunchest proponents



Meghan Callahan 2004 Fellow

Resident Director, Cornell-Brown-Penn UK Centre

In 2004 I was awarded a CLIR Mellon fellowship for research in the archives of the cloistered convent of La Crocetta in Florence. My dissertation revealed the architectural patronage of Sister Domenica da Paradiso, who was the first lower-class woman in Renaissance Italy to found a convent. Domenica claimed funding from the Virgin Mary, and I set out to find her actual financial backers, who hid their support in the dangerous political era of the Medici family’s exiles and returns to Florence.

I spent a year going “behind the grate” to the nuns’ archive. My days reading documents in the convent, with time marked by bells calling the nuns to prayer,

are some of my fondest memories of becoming a scholar. CLIR’s generosity enabled me to research full time. Through reading the contemporary biographies of Domenica written by her confessor, her letters, and account books, I discovered the political and spiritual motives of Domenica’s financial supporters. My publications revive her voice, revealing new approaches to understanding women’s lives and class interaction in Renaissance Florence. Learning to work with original sources later enhanced my research at the Victoria and Albert Museum as a Kress fellow from 2006–2008.

I am still using the digital files of the convent manuscripts as I prepare a book on Domenica in Renaissance Florence. My publications have recently been cited by historians of religion and art, and I share my transcriptions and digital files with other scholars in an effort to broaden our knowledge of the early modern era.

of tenure-track-job-or-bust slink from the scene. This form of American exceptionalism—earning a PhD in the humanities or humanistic social sciences solely intended as a form of scholarly replacement—that is, to become a tenure-track professor—took a major crisis to examine. Should we expand this conversation with the fellows, making it more than a fifteen-minute add-on to the last session? Should we bring them together with former CLIR postdocs to talk about the next steps in their lives?

This brings me to a final point. For several years, Chuck Henry and I have been thinking about the various communities that CLIR has brought into existence and wondering if there is a way to mobilize the talent in these groups to tackle some of the larger questions we face. These communities include the Mellon and CLIR postdoctoral fellows as well as the CLIR Chief Information Officers, the Hidden Collections community, and the Leading Change Institute. These programs share the kind of critical edge that is a hallmark of CLIR programs—the questioning of inherited norms informed by lived experience and scholarly expertise. Each community comes at the questions from a slightly different perspective. Would it make sense to bring mixed groups of them back together to think through how to collaborate effectively across academic silos? To identify the most pressing issues preventing effective collaboration? To pinpoint the aspects of college and university teaching, learning, and research that are most in need of change? Given the speed of change in so many areas, might we want to consider mobilizing experts working outside the box in various arenas? The skills of these differently positioned people transfer in so many ways. What if each year we were to have an event engaging a mixture of these professionals around a specific question?

Mentoring and the Challenge of the Humanities

R. A. Kashanipour, *Assistant Professor of History, Northern Arizona University, and 2014–2016 Omohundro Institute Fellow for Early American History and Culture, College of William and Mary*

In a special series on mentoring in the American Historical Association's *Perspectives*, the historian Steven Volk noted that “the process of researching and completing a dissertation is solitary and isolating work. Peers and writing colleagues can help, but most of us succeeded by relying on *our own inner resources*” (Volk 2012, 28).¹

In the humanities, mentoring is a critical though elusive component to graduate education. The final stages of graduate training—conducting independent research, analyzing unique source data, and writing original dissertations—represent the most important components to building a successful future. Nevertheless, during these challenging periods students are often isolated from their intellectual, professional, and personal networks. At the same time, institutional mentoring and faculty support are highly individualized and inconsistent. Graduate training often operates by what Rob Gilbert has identified as a “hidden curriculum,” with exercises and expectations invisibly woven into pedagogy and academic culture (Gilbert 2009, 56). Students are seemingly expected to adapt and adjust to unstated and invisible expectations.

Furthermore, as J. D. Nyquist pointed out more than a decade ago, doctoral education has been slow to adapt to the needs and challenges of the digital age, leaving graduate students to adjust to new technologies or be cast on the wrong side of a growing digital divide (Nyquist 2002). Although scholars have long associated effective mentoring with immediate and long-term success in graduate education, junior scholars in the humanities, as Volk noted, are often thrust into the academic trenches of intensive research with little more for guidance than personal anecdotes and good wishes.²

¹ Emphasis added.

² See Adams 1992; Higgins and Kram 2001; and Baker and Lattuca 2010.

Recognizing the practical realities of these issues, over the past five years my CLIR colleagues and I have worked to build a mentoring and peer network program that aims to support our Mellon Fellows. Here I reflect on our endeavors and posit ways to move forward.

CLIR's Mellon Fellowships for Dissertation Research in Original Sources support brilliant and ambitious young scholars working on historically informed topics that cut across disciplinary and regional boundaries. I am continuously amazed by the depth and breadth of scholarship that the fellowship fosters.³ As Jahnke and Watson's analysis shows, the typical CLIR Mellon fellow works in multiple research sites, most commonly in libraries and archives, but also in museums and private repositories. The fellowship is designed to be flexible and to accommodate the realities of archive-based research. Although all fellows work with original historical sources, the range of topics varies considerably across time and area. In the 2013 cohort, for instance, projects included a global history of the circulation of classical Latin texts in the early modern Iberian world, a cultural study of the moral economies of erotic commerce in twentieth-century America, a social history of Christian missionary education in Ottoman Syria, a comparative study of the development of American prisons around the world, a visual investigation into robots and globalization in contemporary Korean art, and a study examining the intertwined nature of genetic science and nationalism in the modern Middle East.

The CLIR Mellon fellow mentoring and peer network program was created in response both to issues expressed by our fellows and to Jahnke and Watson's recommendation in this volume to foster a research community and give students a realistic picture of the research process. I have had the pleasure of working closely with the CLIR Mellon program as both a fellow, starting in 2007, and as a mentor, since 2010. As a fellow, I conducted research in dozens of archives and libraries in countries spread across the Atlantic as I investigated the history of infirmity and remediation in the early modern Spanish Atlantic world. As a mentor I have worked closely with Elliott Shore, Mark Dimunation, Amy Lucko, Christa Williford, and Nicole Ferraiolo to help guide fellows through the rigors and challenges of intensive humanities research.

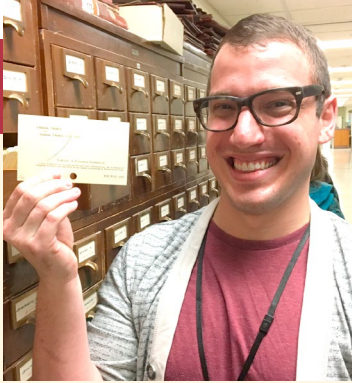
³ I write having just received a copy of 2008 CLIR Mellon fellow Alex Borucki's new book, *From Shipmates to Soldiers: Emerging Black Identities in the Rio de la Plata* (University of New Mexico Press, 2015). This is truly a groundbreaking book that joins numerous others from past CLIR fellows that currently populate my bookshelves, including Rebecca Davis, *More Perfect Unions: The American Search for Marital Bliss* (Harvard University Press, 2010); María Lane, *Geographies of Mars: Seeing and Knowing the Red Planet* (University of Chicago Press, 2011); Jonathan Levy, *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America* (Harvard University Press, 2012); Alisha Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany* (University of Chicago Press, 2013); and Ellen Boucher, *Empire's Children: Child Emigration, Welfare, and the Decline of the British World, 1869-1967* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

How the Program Fosters Community and Support

Our fellows are among the most exceptional and promising graduate students, but many report feeling that their graduate programs leave them underprepared for the intellectual, practical, and personal rigors of extensive field research. At CLIR, our approach prioritizes community building, peer modeling, and developmental networks over the traditional mentor-protégé relationship. There are three critical components to this program. First, we organize our fellows into a professional social network that serves as a platform for long-distance interactions. Within the closed-group social network, fellows are able to participate in online discussions, post resources to a shared online library, and blog on their experiences. Given the disparate nature of research being conducted by each cohort, the online community forms an important component to maintaining connections with the mentor team and within the group. To help drive usage in the early stages of the fellowship, each fellow sets up a profile that contains contact and professional information and shares personal details and anecdotes. The online discussion is a means to convey announcements and information about upcoming events. Since many of our fellows work in remote locations with only intermittent Internet access, the discussion page and online library are important venues for catching up on news from peers and sharing research tips and tools.

Second, we encourage fellows to write formal and informal reflections on the research process. In particular, we use a closed-group blog through which we ask fellows to critically reflect on their professional and personal experiences around a set of focused themes. Entries are informal, reflective, and organized around how people, places, materials, and encounters shape research. For example, with the first blog post, we ask fellows to discuss the importance of place, particularly how physical spaces inform the social and intellectual aspects of their research. Recent entries on this theme have dealt with the challenges of conducting research everywhere from isolated cabins in the Alaskan Arctic to the war-torn landscapes of Syria.

Finally, recognizing that intensive research is often invigorating, exhausting, and confounding, we hold regular, in-person and online discussions with fellows to anticipate and examine research challenges. Five to six times within the fellowship cycle we host live, online Web-based discussions that last about an hour and a half. Fellows attend the meetings and, depending on their connectivity, participate through video, audio, and/or chat. It is not uncommon to have as many as 15 fellows participating in an online discussion. It is a marvel to behold. We use these sessions to encourage real-time reflection on the aims, methods, and practice of conducting research. A recent fellow summarized how the online discussions had helped him. "A series of conversations with other CLIR fellows about the problem of 'collecting' convinced me to be less compulsive about gathering data... I was both more productive and more satisfied with



Edward A. Falk 2014 Fellow

PhD Candidate in History, UC San Diego

As much as academia prides itself on being insulated from pressures of the outside world, there are significant institutional and psychological barriers to conducting research that crosses national borders or transgresses cultural and political norms. My own work on Lebanese ethno-cultural identity in the Ottoman period was held back by its transnational focus and political limitations. As much as many Lebanese, Turks, or other nationalities wax poetic about history, meaningful historical research can depart significantly from their idealized past. When I first visited the Ottoman Archives in Istanbul, I listed my research topic on a form as “education in Ottoman

Lebanon.” Forgetting that for 400 years today’s Lebanon comprised an integral part of the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish archivist asked what I was doing in Turkey if I studied Lebanon. This is precisely the *raison d’être* for original source research—throwing common knowledge and accepted myths to the wind. In parallel, some of my most interesting original sources were disciplinary reports and treason case records, records of ideological and social norms. These sources were often the only record of dissident writing and protest, simultaneously showing what made Ottoman institutions uneasy. While cranky archivists and bureaucratic political unease have slowed my research at times, my research supported by the CLIR-Mellon grant facilitated the completion of my dissertation research. Beyond my project, CLIR’s embrace of unconventional topics and sources is crucial to the advancement of original and innovative research.

each day’s research... The video conferences we held throughout the year were particularly useful in helping me see where I was making mistakes and how I might think about fixing them. I hope that feature of the fellowship lives on to help future fellows through their own rough patches.”

Following are some thoughts about how to offer the kind of support that this young researcher found so helpful to the larger community of humanists.

Applying Mentoring More Broadly Within the Humanities

For the select few who receive this fellowship, the program provides a distinct level of support that serves to redress the challenges of graduate education noted by Volk, Gilbert, and Nyquist. This program encourages scholarly community building among peers, among disciplines, and across generations. Our mentoring attempts to build a framework to advance professional development and create positive psychological and social networks. We encourage our fellows to carry these values and activities well beyond the limits of this program. I would like colleagues to think about the usefulness of these approaches, not just for the CLIR Mellon fellowship but, more widely, for other humanities-based research endeavors. Do we need better mentoring programs within the humanities? Is there a way to systematize or promote peer and cross-generational mentoring within the humanities?

Better Preparing Junior Researchers for How to Approach Cultural Institutions

Mellon Fellows tend to come to dissertation research with little knowledge in how cultural institutions—libraries, archives, museums—have developed over time. For scholars in the humanities, the collection, content, and organization of records critically shapes research and interpretations. At an intellectual level, the lack of humanities-based methodologies leaves fellows feeling that they must develop their approaches and interpretations on their own. This is not to say that there are no methods in the humanities or that graduate students create their own perspectives. Rather, there seem to be few formal conversations about research methods in the humanities. This is, I suspect, a product of resistance to creating a unified approach and language of methods among scholars. A dissertation is an exercise in the production of knowledge. But knowledge can only be generated by critically engaging how information is socially organized and consolidated. So how do we better prepare junior scholars to engage with the people and institutions that form the basis of their research? Can we encourage discussions of research that promote broader conversations about methods and approaches?

Helping Humanities Researchers Appeal to a Larger Audience

Finally, our work with the Mellon program has come during a critical time in the humanities. Audiences seem to be shifting their attention to other fields, and the job market appears to be contracting. I suggest that the dilemma is rooted not in external forces but in how we in the humanities translate our work to others. Michael Bérubé, past president of the Modern Language Association, has suggested that the structure of graduate education in the humanities needs to be rethought to meet the shifting interests and changing skills of the contemporary intellectual and labor marketplace. Nevertheless, he also noted that the richness and diversity of current scholarship in the field. “There is no doubt,” Bérubé wrote, “that the study of the humanities is more vibrant, more exciting, and (dare I say it) more important than it was a generation ago” (Bérubé 2013).

In many respects, our fellows embody this contradiction. They are gifted researchers and scholars. Yet many of them struggle to convey the significance of their own work to diverse audiences. Many need practical training in writing, not only the analytical dissertation but also synthetic pieces to reach audiences beyond their field. While some of their limits may be expected—they are still graduate students—this handicap reflects a wider need in the humanities to effectively communicate our findings, perspectives, and values to different audiences. Like so many other graduate students, CLIR Mellon fellows would benefit from a bridge program that focuses on practical training and skills development to meet changing market needs. Scholars of all generations could benefit by becoming better equipped to engage with scholars, professionals, and the broader public.

The need to build communities of scholars and to teach a methodology of humanistic inquiry is inexorably linked to the need for the humanities to connect to broader audiences. We must not only relay the content of the knowledge we produce, but also translate the tools and forms to others to generate new lines of inquiry. Is there a way to create a peer and mentoring community that bridges not only practical skills for junior scholars, but also works more broadly to develop wider lines of communication and exchange for the field? I hope that our conversation about the CLIR Mellon program can generate ideas to help move scholars away from relying solely on their own inner resources toward building a framework to create connected communities for the humanities as a whole.

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The Discussion

CLIR convened a meeting in January 2016 with leaders from a range of research and cultural heritage institutions that support graduate work with original sources. Two of the meeting's participants, William G. Thomas III, and Michael F. Suarez, S.J., were invited to expand upon the discussion through essays reflecting on the position of original source research in the contemporary scholarly landscape.

Renegotiating the Archive: Scholarly Practice in a Digital Age

William G. Thomas III, *John and Catherine Angle Professor in the Humanities, and Professor of History, University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

In the past two decades scholarly practice in archival research has changed substantially. The availability of digital finding aids and digital facsimiles of original sources combined with powerful search engines and digital library technologies have altered how historians and other researchers encounter, access, and use archives and sources. Scholars who were trained to work solely in physical archives are now dealing with a fundamentally new environment. These changes have come with considerable anxieties about whether digitization and digital archives are replacing, as well as displacing, traditional archival work in the archives. Judging from the experience of the Mellon Fellows, however, these same changes have also heightened scholars' reliance on the expertise of archivists and librarians. The relationship between the scholar and the archivist or librarian has become more central, more direct, and more consequential, not less. As a result, we need to renegotiate what happens in and with the archive.

Archival Anxieties

In 2003 historian Roy Rosenzweig foresaw an age of digital information overload as presenting fundamentally new and different problems for scholars accustomed to scarcity and limited sources. "One of the most vexing and interesting features of the digital era," he wrote, "is the way it unsettles traditional arrangements and forces us to ask basic questions that have been there all along." Rosenzweig argued that historians would need to change their methods "to meet the challenge of a cornucopia of historical sources" (2003, 758 and 760).

Rosenzweig was mainly talking about using algorithms and computational technologies to systematically sort through and

organize an ever-expanding virtual world of information. He argued that every day we generate terabytes of digital data, including emails, images, videos, and audio files. All of this material soon becomes the archival record of our cultural heritage. In the case of the Clinton administration's correspondence, for example, millions of emails went into the archive along with thousands of printed hard-copy letters and reports. A single scholar could hardly read such voluminous correspondence. Rosenzweig pointed out that computational means would be necessary to help scholars, in any investigation and our methods would need to change, even as he asked, "will abundance bring better or more thoughtful history?"

While Rosenzweig was writing his seminal and prescient essay, other scholars were struggling to come to terms with the changing practices of original research made possible by rudimentary websites and search technologies. In 2005, historian René M. Sentilles was surprised to discover online hundreds of references and documents on the subject of her research, Civil War actress and poet Adah Issacs Menken. Sentilles thought that the virtual, disembodied research experience raised doubts about the validity of the practice of historical "mastery" and the permanence of the object of study. With websites disappearing and reappearing over time, Sentilles concluded that Google searches and digital sources, however useful, were not as satisfying as getting "the dust of two centuries under my nails." Sentilles realized that after a few weeks of reading the private letters and diaries of her subject from folders and boxes, she had come to know her in a personal way she did not "even try to describe" in the book she eventually wrote.

This archival ideal of inhabiting the subject of our investigation is a powerful one. For many scholars this takes place in the physical space of the archive, where we touch, feel, smell, and even hear the past in the material objects we handle. Seeing the "human response to tangible objects" as the central drama of archival research, Sentilles speculated, "Virtual archives will never serve as more than a place to begin and end the research journey; never as a place to dwell" (2005, 155).

Yet, ten years later the reverse seems to be more accurate in describing the practice of scholars and the way that archives and sources have been renegotiated. The virtual has become the place to dwell, and the archive has become the place to begin and end. Correspondingly we are revising the archival ideal for the digital age in ways that stir the same kinds of emotional responses, commitments, and discoveries that the old ideal did.

What explains this turnaround? Certainly, mass digitization projects have offered scholars more reliable, stable, and fully documented access to original sources. But the widespread use of digital cameras has probably had the greatest effect on research practice. Judging from the findings of Jahnke and Watson (in this volume), 58 percent of all Mellon Fellows carried digital cameras into 750 sites between 2002 and 2014.

According to Jennifer Rutner and Roger C. Schonfeld (2012),



Jang Wook Huh 2012 Fellow

Visiting Assistant Professor, Dept. of English, University at Buffalo, SUNY

My experience as a CLIR Mellon fellow was crucial in developing my research and teaching on modern cross-cultural exchanges in trans-Pacific circuits. My research examines a literary and cultural history that traces the little-known alliance between African Americans and Koreans against the Japanese and U.S. empires from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. While face-to-face meetings between them occurred infrequently during this period, their major interactions transpired in texts through literal and metaphorical translation. I conducted archival research in South Korea and Japan in 2012–2013 to unearth and explore forms and modes of cross-cultural connection. I was initially eager to find evidence that illustrates “Afro-Korean” solidarity, but

I also encountered records (such as Koreans’ physiognomic depictions of African Americans) that encouraged me to revise my original claim. Such “counter-examples” in fact helped me nuance my research in that as recent scholarship focuses on so-called “comparative racialization,” cross-racial interplays are usually visual and messy. Digging into archives can be both frustrating and epiphanic when we come across documents that are irrelevant to or beyond our projects at hand. These materials might entail big or small future projects. For example, the letters, translations, and religious tracts I collected unexpectedly inspired ideas for new research. I attained skills and creativity in using original sources through my archival research and CLIR’s valuable workshops. I have incorporated this knowledge and inspiration into my courses on techniques of documentation that make race visible and invisible. Archival sources enable me to recover and teach a forgotten literary history in the Pacific.

“The introduction of digital cameras to archival research is altering interactions with materials and dislocating the process of analysis, with potential impacts not only for support service providers but for the nature of history scholarship itself.” Interviewing dozens of historians, they observed that what happens in the archives has become “more photographic and less analytical.” The use of digital cameras, they concluded, is “perhaps the single most significant shift in research practices among historians.” Rutner and Schonfeld also noted that some historians “no longer engage intellectually with the sources while in the archives; these trips have become more of a collection mission.”

Both the scholars interviewed in the Ithaka report and the fellows in the CLIR/Mellon program indicate considerable anxiety about collecting digital images of original sources as a research practice. They worry about the lack of metadata, the challenge of integrating images with textual notes on sources, the difficulty of managing thousands of image files, and perhaps most significantly, the failure to analyze sources at the moment they are first encountered in the archive.

They are not alone. A random sample of faculty across the sciences, social sciences, and humanities by Ithaka S+R in 2012 found that about half of faculty members strongly agreed when asked if they would like to “more deeply” integrate digital research activities and methodologies into their work. But a third of humanities scholars “strongly disagreed” with the statement. Of these, 75 percent did so because “digital research activities and methodologies are not valuable or important” for the type of research they do. About

one-third of respondents agreed that they did not know “how to effectively integrate digital research activities and methodologies” into their work (Housewright, Schonfeld, and Wulfson 2013, 41-44).

We have done little to prepare ourselves for this transition and the anxieties it has produced. When we refer to or handle original sources in digital or physical form, we often do not recognize when the source has been deformed in subtle or substantial ways. A physical object might undergo alterations that even its closest observers do not realize. The colors in Rembrandt’s paintings, for example, have slowly changed over centuries as a result of hardened oil and varnish. Blueprints fade over time to reveal lines once drawn but previously not visible, a vista onto what was not built but was once imagined. Mary Todd Lincoln’s cloak, “wet with blood,” has become less visibly stained over time. Infrared light reveals what the human eye cannot see, but the cloak’s exact provenance remains undocumented (Burton 2005; Buenger and Bridge 2000). We often do not know the ways that our archival materials have been collected, arranged, and presented for specific uses. We often do not know what has been excluded from these collections. When we use the physical, the “original,” what are we using? When we use the “digital,” what are we using? How can we recognize the terms dictating these negotiations?

When libraries “go digital” and remove books and other materials to distant off-site locations, sometimes days away, the record of the past that humanities scholars consulted with regularity becomes, in one stroke, less accessible. The majority of volumes many humanities scholars use are copyrighted texts that are not available in mass digitization projects. As a result, the removal of these secondary sources upon which historians previously relied compounds the anxiety they are feeling about the authenticity of the digitized source. Scholars long considered the library to be a laboratory for the humanities, a central hub where the full range of secondary works mediated their access to and understanding of original archival sources. Without the ability to put hands on the secondary apparatus and its relationship to original sources, scholars understandably begin to question the confidence of their interpretive authority.

The library as a laboratory seems to have been turned on its head. As digital archival collections go online, what was once remote—the original source—has become immediately accessible. Yet what was once immediately accessible—the secondary interpretive source—has become more distant. This reversal may have long-term unanticipated and unintended effects stemming from the interruption of the fruitful negotiation in the library between original sources and their interpretive historiographical context. Repairing and mediating that negotiation in the digital library will require the collaboration of archivists and scholars.

The operations that digital humanities scholars perform on sources further complicate matters. When we encode and mark up texts for computational processing, we make various aspects of texts organizable and searchable even as we radically reduce the complexity of human language, making our entry points into the

text and across texts more rigid, uniform, and far less supple than in analog form. When we build a virtual model of a place, a historical site, a genre, or a period, we highlight linkages and relationships selectively and often to the exclusion of other possibilities.¹ Despite the advantages of the digital medium for linking texts and encoding metadata, we often make interpretive argument less apparent. Digital scholars have stressed the act of encoding original sources more than interpreting how these sources relate to the secondary apparatus of historiography and criticism. The stresses on humanities scholars conducting this research are significant and contribute to a broad sense of epistemological concern.

Historian Lara Putnam in the April 2016 *American Historical Review* describes another professional challenge that has accompanied mass digitization and digital searching. “For the first time,” she writes, “historians can *find* without knowing where to look.” She calls this new complication “disintermediated discovery.” Putnam argues that digital searching “opens shortcuts that enable ignorance as well as knowledge” and a “release from place-based research practices that have been central to our discipline’s epistemology and

¹ On modeling, see McCarty 2004.



Maria Lane 2003 Fellow

Associate Professor & Chair, Geography & Environmental Studies, University of New Mexico

My first book, *Geographies of Mars*, emerged from dissertation research conducted in archives and observatories throughout Europe and North America, where I pieced together geopolitical narratives that surrounded early cartographic explorations of the planet Mars. The CLIR Mellon fellowship funded the majority of this research, including lengthy stays in London (at the Royal Astronomical Society), Milan (at Brera Observatory), and in Flagstaff, Arizona (at Lowell Observatory) to pore over astronomers’ publications, letters, and observation logbooks.

In addition to providing direct training for archival methods, the fellowship was critical to my scholarly development because the stipend enabled me to engage in immersive work with original sources. Without the fellowship, it would not have been possible to visit as many archives as I did, or to study the the same variety of materials, and the quality of my dissertation and subsequent book were consequently much higher than they would have been otherwise on the same time scale.

By allowing me to finish a good dissertation that later became a good book, the fellowship played a major role in my getting a tenure-track job and then receiving tenure in a timely manner. When I think back on the value of my time as a fellow, however, it is clear that intellectual development was its most important effect. The opportunity to work extensively with historical sources came at a formative point in my career, helping me identify confidently as a historical geographer even though this specialization is fairly rare in the United States. With a significant 18 months of archival work behind me, I emerged from grad school with enough methodological knowledge and composure to embark on what has been a satisfying and productive scholarly path, often in intellectual conversation with peers in Canada and the United Kingdom. I became editor for the journal *Historical Geography* at a young age and have been very active in the global scholarly community in historical geography. My more recent projects, which still focus on arid and colonial landscapes (albeit now terrestrial ones), have been distinctive within my subfield for their deep and immersive approach to original archival materials. In an era of increasing digital availability for historical materials, I feel even more committed to the imperative of going into the archives to see and handle all the non-digitized materials as well. For me, that’s undoubtedly the biggest impact of the CLIR Mellon fellowship.

ethics alike" (2016, 377 and 379).²

We see evidence of these concerns when both the scholars in the Ithaka report and the fellows in the CLIR/Mellon assessment report the displacement of intellectual engagement with original sources as problematic. One of the premises at work is that the archive constitutes an important, indeed paramount, site of discovery and intellectual activity. The material object speaks to the scholar in tactile and sensory ways, while dwelling with these material objects allows the scholar to absorb and apprehend their meaning. Scholars find digital imaging and access convenient, but report this convenience as a trade-off. Something, they suggest, appears to have been lost. Yet, I am not so sure.

New Archival Possibilities

Historian Durba Ghosh has written about how the structure, arrangement, and management of archives can resist the narratives and questions scholars carry into them. In her case she encountered archivists who showed her some materials but not others and who made assumptions about what she should and should not have access to because she was a woman of Indian ethnicity. Although she too appreciates the dust of original documents, she has sought to "expand our definitions of the kinds of knowledges that archives produce by destabilizing the notion that archives are only places of impersonal encounters with printed documents." Instead, some encounters can be highly personal and particular; in a second encounter with the same object, a scholar may see something entirely different. Ghosh, furthermore, notes that after completing her dissertation, and once she was back in the archives, she "finally knew" what she "was looking for" (2005, 28 and 40).

Two points are worth making here. The first is that colonial, gendered, and political organization and maintenance of archives in no small measure works to deflect some kinds of research and some kinds of researchers. Gatekeepers restrict access or scrutinize whether a researcher should or should not be inquiring into a subject. Ghosh's research into interracial relations in colonial India prompted highly gendered reactions from archives and archivists, affecting her access to the original sources. Digitization can to a significant degree liberate sources from the physical, cultural, and social restrictions that attend them in the archive.

The second is that scholars do not always know what they are looking for when they enter an archive, even after intense planning and research. They bring certain questions into the archive at a given point in their research process only to find that much later they realize other questions to ask. Digital materials allow for a longer, more deliberate, continuous, iterative process of research and discovery.

Although neither the Ithaka report nor the CLIR/Mellon fellows

² Putnam's essay is the first to address what she calls "a sea change at the core of our collective practice."

report specified these renegotiations, scholars using digital cameras in the archives are participating in a new practice characterized by a deliberately more prolonged interaction between the researcher and the object.

Why have scholars so prized the transcendent qualities of the material object, the so-called dust in the archives? One reason is that letters and diaries in particular carry the voices of the past into the present, and these inanimate objects become animated through the personal penmanship of the correspondent and diarist. They are the physical traces of our subjects long dead and gone. In "The Historian as Death Investigator," Stephen Berry, a historian of the American Civil War, has written about this strange "temporal vertigo" and points out that anyone who has done work in an archive knows "the Zen-like moment when you forget not merely where you are but when you are, who you are, almost *that* you are." This "wormhole" into the past, he suggests, is somewhat stupefying and it works a kind of spell over the investigator. For Berry who studied death records of soldiers, it begins with the dull recognition that "this guy isn't going to make it." Berry, however, experiences this vertigo whether in the physical archives or perusing digital images of original hospital records and death certificates (Berry 2011, 184–185).

This state of affairs is not unlike what has happened in oral history, where the practice of historians in the digital age has undergone significant renegotiation. Historian Michael Frisch has pointed out that even with oral histories "generally nobody has spent much time listening or watching the recordings, the primary source. Instead, the modal plane of engagement has been textual." Working with text transcriptions became "natural" even though the source was entirely aural. Frisch notes that the methods and theories used in oral history have been derivative of their textual, rather than aural, materiality. As practices emerge around and with digital technologies, as questions of these sources become "tractable" only in their aural form, other methods and theories become possible (Cohen and Frisch 2008, 459).

When we look for people long invisible in the written record, who did not leave letters and diaries, their traces in the archive are mediated and embedded to a degree that requires us to renegotiate our work in the archive. In the case of Ghosh's investigation into interracial sex in British colonial India, she found that the archives, even those who managed them, functioned to keep such stories from ever surfacing in the record. Dust or no dust, finding their voices in the archive would mean confronting and breaking the institutional and historical modes of marginalizing. In this respect digital capture for later analysis may be essential, an act that allows for a more unmediated and extensive examination than possible in a purely physical, time limited, and on-site encounter. Even if one scholar is not able to access a collection, for whatever reason, another scholar might be able to gain access and ultimately share these sources.

In current research into legal records, a similar renegotiation is underway. Scholars seeking to build up the histories of long

marginalized people are moving beyond the limitations of solely on-site, physical encounter with original sources. The Old Bailey Online, for example, has digitized the printed *Proceedings* of the court published from 1674 to 1913, volumes encompassing 197,745 criminal trials. While voluminous and rich in detail, these reports were highly selective and the original case papers remain at the National Archives (Public Record Office).

Similarly, the case files of the Circuit Court for the District of Columbia in Record Group 21 of the National Archives and Records Administration were administrative records designed to order and bureaucratize legal procedures and actions. Enslaved people who petitioned for their freedom worked their histories into these legal forms. But the printed records of the court's decisions published by Chief Justice William Cranch revealed little about their lives or their experiences. Cranch's volumes have been cited routinely in appellate decisions and legal briefs, as well as relied upon by legal historians for years. Yet, Cranch excluded the last names of African Americans throughout his volumes and focused mainly on legal procedures and rules. The result is a genealogical and historical erasure that needs repair. Digitizing Cranch's volumes only perpetuates the historical erasure of petitioners for freedom. When the original case papers are extracted from their archival sequence and examined as a whole, the full genealogies of these families become visible to the scholar.³

In my own research, continual, repeated examination of digitized case papers has led to discoveries nearly impossible to make on site using the physical records.⁴ A recent research trip to the National Archives (Public Record Office) illustrates this point. My research into a Maryland enslaved family indicated that their claim to freedom could possibly be proven today, 200 years after their case was unsuccessful. Their lawyers had filed a number of exhibits as evidence, including depositions from earlier cases tried in the 1790s. These depositions referred to litigation in London's early eighteenth-century chancery court, where creditors hoped to extract a higher profit from the captain of a transatlantic raiding voyage. One of the Maryland depositions indicated that the family members petitioning for freedom were the direct descendants of a free woman from New Spain who was carried to London on this voyage. Every item on the vessels was accounted for and documented, and every expense double-checked. Ledgers were re-tabulated; receipts were re-bundled. A special master certified each account and record. I estimated over 3,000 individual items in the chancery record for this case. It was not possible to conduct a thorough analysis of each record while I was in the archive. In the four days I had on site, however, it was possible to review each item and digitally capture hundreds of important records for later examination and reflection. In the months following this visit I have been able to substantiate their claim based on cross-referencing original sources from other collections.

³ See earlywashingtondc.org.

⁴ Old Baily Online, <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org> and O Say Can You See: Early Washington, D.C., Law and Family, <http://earlywashingtondc.org>.



Figure 1: Chancery record at National Archives, Kew, December 2015.

Rutner and Schonfeld described this form of on-site collection as a “displacement of the intellectual engagement with the material,” and they raised understandable concerns about its “downsides.” But there are clear upsides. Some scholars are developing an alternative method as they visit archives and capture digital images for ongoing assessment and reassessment. This method supports a continual process of archival engagement, rather than one dependent on an exclusively tactile engagement with the physical object. Because the questions we ask on site may not be those we need to ask later and because the subjects we seek to investigate may only reveal themselves after weeks or months of systematic analysis, we are beginning to see a new practice in archival research take shape, one that begins and ends on site in the archives, and dwells for far longer on the virtual representation and manipulation of digitized original sources.

These scholars are inaugurating a digital archival ideal that is as powerfully alluring as that of its physical counterpart. Scholars with high-resolution digital images and large, high-resolution monitors can manipulate the digital object long after their visit to the archive. They can recast, rearrange, and renegotiate the source, seeing it in multiple frames, dimensions, scales, and abstractions. Perhaps most important, they can encounter the document again and again, returning to it with fresh questions and perspectives. In my own research, digitized collections have allowed me to conduct iterative readings and discover differences in the spelling of individual names impossible to see otherwise.⁵

⁵ There is a growing literature on digital humanities and aesthetics and design, too much to refer to here. An essential beginning point is Drucker 2009.



Pablo Palomino 2010 Fellow

Postdoctoral Lecturer, Center for Latin American Studies and History Dept., University of Chicago

I am currently writing a book manuscript based on the archival discoveries I made with support of CLIR's Mellon Fellowship for Dissertation Research in Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Mexico City, Berlin, and Washington D.C. This generous fellowship allowed me to work at several sites, which was fundamental to building a transnational argument on my dissertation topic—the globalization of musical practices in the Latin American region in the first half of the twentieth century.

The dissertation research fellowship provided flexible and practical support for long-term archival research in multiple sites. I was able to both shorten and extend different segments of my initial plan, simply based on my intellectual process and the specific demands of each archival site. This experience

taught me that the scope of original sources is always broader and more diverse than we think, and that our best ideas emerge not just from pure thought, but also from the experience of dealing with those physical sources, which can take multiple forms.

This fellowship makes you part of a diverse intellectual community. Before and after the fieldwork, every fellow gets to present and discuss both her initial project and the results of the research, with a multidisciplinary cohort of fantastic colleagues who work in all sorts of archives all over the world, and with an academic committee that combines Library of Congress scholars and previous fellows. In a friendly and intellectually ambitious atmosphere, these workshops allow you not only to realize that the solitary work in the archive can in fact feed the work of other colleagues, and that theirs can inform yours; it also literally expands the contours of your research subjects. This is an invaluable insight that in my case keeps fructifying in my professional life long after finishing that research.

Putting the Archivist-Scholar Collaboration First

Undoubtedly, graduate programs will need to adjust to these new circumstances and practices. The current volume should prompt graduate programs to consider revitalizing historical methods and writing courses. At the 2015 Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) summit on graduate training in the humanities, faculty and graduate directors explored the nature of the graduate curriculum, the dissertation, the role of new media and the digital humanities, and the nature of the public humanities. These discussions followed calls for shortening or changing the dissertation and placing greater emphasis in our programs on skills for alternative career pathways. While the participants in the CIC meeting considered more than the changing state of archival research, they agreed to create a working group to articulate a statement of principles on the dissertation in the humanities.⁶

The reports in this volume indicate the gap in archival training for graduate students and the pressing need for specific methodological training in archival research. One graduate student in the Rutner and Schonfeld report put the problem succinctly:

⁶ The CIC conference was held November 4–5, 2015 at Pennsylvania State University. See also Smith 2015, Bérubé 2013, and Bérubé and Ruth 2015.

One of my big issues with graduate education in general right now is that there's almost no training with methodology and what you actually do in the archive and why that matters . . . There are larger philosophical questions about what an archive is. I haven't gotten systematic training.

At several institutions, graduate programs are already revising not only the scope and form of the dissertation but also the coursework required to gain the skills and techniques necessary for research with original sources. These courses might provide specific guidance on the materiality of sources, how to properly interrogate sources, how to conduct archival research for a large-scale project, and how to manage the research process, including digital images. One way to structure such a course is to emphasize the sharing of "archive stories" between faculty and graduate students. Our new course on research and archival methods at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is premised on such exchanges. Each week, part of the course is given over to a rotating, faculty-led archive story.

These reflections feature the experiences of practitioners working in various archives around the world and consider archives as a contact zone between researcher and what a state or institution allows her or him to see. These stories also explore the embodied experience of the researcher working within the physical environment and regime of the archive. And they provide basic hands-on guidance on how to prepare for an archive visit, how to conduct oneself when there, and, most importantly, how to do research when on site.

Further, graduate programs might bring archivists and librarians more directly into the training of graduate students. At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln we have restructured the methods course to include consultation with our university archivists, drawing on the expertise of our library faculty. Many of the steps to navigate archives were once learned without formal training, by trial and error. Students in this course also visit the university and state archives and make requests for collections. With a variety of collections laid out before them, they discuss with the archivists the tactics, strategies, methods, and ways to record what is found. We seek to model a partnership between historians and archivists and provide critical skills for graduate students to make and sustain such partnerships in their own research.

In embracing a more digital archival ideal, alongside our more traditional methods we might give our students the opportunity to create new forms of scholarly communication and expression. As historian Edward L. Ayers (2013) has pointed out, "Digital scholarship may have greater impact if it takes fuller advantage of the digital medium and innovates more aggressively. Digital books and digital articles that mimic their print counterparts may be efficient, but they do not expand our imagination of what scholarship *could* be in an era of boundlessness . . . when our audiences can be far more fast and varied than in previous generations."

Our graduate training in research might feature ways to see

the archives as a social space and experience. Both pre-doctoral and post-doctoral scholars are finding that these new circumstances prompt more rather than less collaboration with archives, and more rather than fewer opportunities for archival engagement. Digital imaging and other techniques do not in and of themselves displace intellectual engagement with original sources, nor do they displace archives and archivists. Scholars working with archivists are negotiating partnerships and drawing on one another's expertise. Some of these collaborations will result in more formal joint projects, while others will lead to ongoing informal exchanges. We should welcome these opportunities.

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Christiane Gruber 2002 Fellow

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After pursuing my undergraduate degree at Princeton University, I decided to specialize in Islamic art at the PhD level at the University of Pennsylvania. In my dissertation, I explored the Prophet Muhammad's celestial ascension in premodern Islamic texts and images. My research into these illustrated manuscripts took me to Central Asia, Iran, Turkey, the Arab world, Europe, and America. While many dissertation fellowships are country-specific or, if administered by the U.S. government, limited by sanctions, the CLIR Mellon fellowship in original resources allows scholars such as myself unmatched flexibility to travel around the globe. Indeed, the fellowship offered me the rare opportunity to live and research in

Iran at a time when fellowships were hard to come by and strict international sanctions were in place. Working closely with original resources in international collections proved pivotal to my professional and intellectual development as a scholar working in Islamic book arts, material structures, codicology, and paleography. CLIR's mandate also opened my eyes to a number of issues and problems that confront librarians, curators, and scholars as they come together toward the common goal of organizing, studying, and preserving cultural patrimony. Such issues have become increasingly pressing today as the Islamic world witnesses unprecedented cultural destruction on the ground. As a result of spending substantial time with original materials, and making them central to my research agenda, these precious resources have energized me to become a public speaker, writer, and activist working toward protecting Islam's rich artistic heritage.

Reading the Materiality of the Archive

Michael F. Suarez, S.J., *Director of Rare Book School, Professor of English, University Professor, and Honorary Curator of Special Collections, University of Virginia*

In A. S. Byatt's novel *Possession*, one of the protagonists recalls the moment that led him toward a life spent in libraries and archives: "When my father first handed me the handwritten pages [of a Victorian autograph letter], to see if I could decipher them, [I felt] something akin to the thrill of Keats's stout Cortez, silent on his peak in Darien. And when I had touched the letter, I felt, in Tennyson's words, that the dead man had touched me from the past."

This encounter—in which the young man touches a textual artifact and, in turn, is touched by the historical, human presences it evokes—is transformative. Ever since that day, he explains, "I have made my life among 'Those fallen leaves which keep their green / The noble letters of the dead.'"

The lure of the artifact, the savor of the archive, excites an appetite for the past. Skillfully mediated, the tangible artifact is a bridge to history, a portal to discovery, a summons to wonder. The abstractions of history are marvelously concretized, the dusty archive brought to life, and the hermetic world of scholarship accorded a local habitation and a name.¹ Aply interpreted, the textual artifact becomes the vehicle through which historical narrative is made intelligible, new knowledge conduces toward wonder, and wonder toward love. Inculcating wonder is the delightful business of the archival scholar who fires the hearts of students and contributes to the common good by bringing scholarship into the public square.

Although humanities scholars increasingly rely on digital surrogates in their work, few have a richly developed sense of what may be gained from studying primary sources in their primary forms, or what may be lost in their digital iteration. What does it mean to be able to "read" a book in its original form: its binding, its illustration,

¹ See, for example, MacGregor 2011. The longstanding success of *Antiques Roadshow* over more than 25 years is also a case in point.

its paper or parchment, the type with which it was printed, the hand in which it was written or annotated? When consulting digital surrogates, how can we identify the original artifact from the forgery, the first printing from the restrike, the compositor's error from the scanner's glitch? Do these differences inform the ways we represent and interpret our past? We are witnessing a kind of "vanishing act" in the historical record, not only in the form of link rot, but also in the unintelligibility of the textual artifact. Even when fully cataloged, many of our collections are in some sense hidden. Their linguistic signs may be legible, but in the absence of bibliographical literacy, the cultural meaning and historical significance of their material forms remain obscure, even occult, while in full view.

As archives become more widely available digitally, the need to cultivate comprehensive understandings of textual artifacts becomes more compelling. The informed scholar will discern both correspondences and discontinuities with the codices from which the digital cultural artifact has been produced. No textual object is, nor can ever be, self-identical across different media, because the materiality of the text is an inescapable part of the ways in which it makes its meanings. The digital materiality of electronic textual artifacts is neither more exalted nor baser than the materiality of printed textual artifacts; it is simply different. Yet, even as we invent new tools to deliver and analyze scholarly texts that increasingly constitute the digitized archive, we would do well to keep faith with their provenance by understanding the processes by which the originary textual artifacts were produced, transmitted, and received. Producers of digitized archival content will need such bibliographical knowledge to cultivate an informed sensitivity to the issues involved in transposing codex-based materials into a digital key. No digitally networked system for textual delivery should be used in a disjunctive relationship to the print-based inheritance from which it has been generated.

The contributors to this volume underscore the need for emerging scholars to cultivate a more complex understanding of the archive. This involves understanding the historical circumstances and cultural contexts of its formation and development, and the values and practices reflected in the work of ongoing acquisition, organization, management, and mediation. Nearly every library, museum, or archive is a collection of collections, each with its own history, curatorial practices, and principles of stewardship and preservation. Deepening scholars' awareness of the archaeologies of knowledge at work in their disciplines will help them to navigate the archive more successfully, and to understand its limitations. Crucially, scholars who cultivate a deep and broad cognizance of the archive over time are able to consider particular collections and individual muniments more broadly in relation to the surviving historical record.²

Digital tools have already become irreplaceable aids in the discovery and study of archival sources, and in the communication of scholarly findings. But it is also true that at times affordance

As archives become more widely available digitally, the need to cultivate comprehensive understandings of textual artifacts becomes more compelling.

² See Blouin and Rosenberg 2011 and Farge 1989.



Lauren Tilton 2013 Fellow

PhD Candidate in American Studies, Yale University, and Co-Director of Photogrammar

The CLIR Mellon fellowship made my research possible. It provided the resources and time to travel to small community archives across the country. As I explored archives in places like Chicago, New Orleans, New York, Whitesburg (KY), I engaged with fragile, unprocessed collections often in need of care but underfunded. In the process, I was able to collaborate with and support individuals and nonprofit organizations to bring attention to rare, community-made archives (particularly 8mm and 16mm films) from the 1960s and 1970s. The opportunity allowed me to do extensive archival research for my dissertation as well as to formulate a digital, public humanities project for digitizing and sharing

these incredible collections with the general public. The films and materials that have been sitting in filing cabinets and closets will now be a part of the Participatory Media (PM) Project, a project funded by an NEH Digital Projects for the Public grant.

Importantly, the process of creating PM reflects my research practice moving forward. Deeply informed and moved by my experience during the fellowship, I learned how important collaboration and co-creation are to the research process. Many of the people I worked with not only maintained the collection but are participants in the events they archived. Reciprocity is critical to research and scholarship and a way of doing research that I will now carry with me always. I am not a researcher who is “discovering” a collection but rather am working with people who are deeply committed to preserving and sharing their histories.

may be near allied to hindrance. For instance, the compulsion of many archival researchers to capture data via digital photography may in some instances result in the scholar’s displacement from the materiality of the textual artifact itself. A vignette comes to mind from Don DeLillo’s *White Noise*, in which several characters visit a tourist attraction said to be the most photographed barn in America. Upon arrival, they encounter “40 cars and a tour bus in the makeshift lot.” Everyone has a camera and is snapping away. “No one sees the barn,” a veteran visitor wryly observes, as they listen “to the incessant clicking of shutter release buttons...” “What was the barn like before it was photographed?” he asks. “What did it look like, how was it different from the other barns, how was it similar to other barns?” No answer is given. No one sees the barn. I often recall this episode as a cautionary tale when my desire in the archive to harvest and acquire supplants my need to recognize and reflect.

We know, in part, by naming, because identification is the act of distinguishing one thing from other, perhaps similar, things. *This is a small octavo; that is a duodecimo*. Because material forms both affect and effect culturally embodied meanings, learning how to read those forms, to make distinctions among them, and to acquire vocabularies for recording and communicating what one observes, are all requisite components of the archival scholar’s toolkit. To the bibliographically literate, the materiality of historical sources is an essential component of their interpretation. What did this book look like to contemporary observers? How was it different from or similar to the other books? In order to begin to answer such questions, we must set

aside our cameras for a little while. We must first learn to see.

Learning to read the object, students of bibliography learn how an artifact's material aspects help form its historically situated meanings. Such object-oriented, palpable discovery—strongly associated with *proprioception*, (from *proprius* and *capere*, to take as one's own)—enables bibliographically literate scholars to grasp the historical archive and to make it their own, so that they might powerfully convey its richness and significance to others. The scholar possessed of the skills to “read” manuscripts and printed books—their physical construction; their provenance; the editorial treatment of their texts; and the historical contexts in which they have been published, circulated, and received—is able to marshal an interpretive richness and complexity that enhances her scholarship at every turn. Absent such preparation, how can we have more than a passing understanding of what we are looking at on our library desks, much less what we might most usefully be looking for?

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AFTERWORD

This Vital Conversation

Charles Henry, *President, Council on Library and Information Resources*

*so much depends
upon*

Although born to relative comfort, Russian literary theorist and semiotician Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) had a difficult career, challenged by quirks of bad timing, the sweep of Soviet political forces, academic fashion, and poor health. Bakhtin’s travails read like a checklist of every scholar’s bad dreams: his first major publication was postponed for 51 years because the journal that had agreed to publish it suddenly closed, and the manuscript was misplaced. At the time of his first monograph, in 1929, Stalin identified him as a problematic intellectual and sent him into exile. In the 1930s another major publication irrevocably lost another of his manuscripts. In the late 1940s, a university denied Bakhtin a doctor of science degree in Moscow because some examiners considered his dissertation on Rabelais inappropriate because of its subject and the pointed language the candidate used in his argument. (He was awarded a lower degree.) He spent the later years of his life in various academic institutions, and died relatively unknown.

Bakhtin’s works were rediscovered in the 1970s and 1980s, to general acknowledgement of his brilliance on a variety of topics. His collected works range from literary criticism, with special emphasis on the novel, to semiotics, communication theory, rhetoric, and the philosophy of language. One of his most respected collections of essays, *The Dialogic Imagination*, strikes me as an apt guide while exploring the strength, persistence, and cultural importance of the Mellon Fellowships for Dissertation Research in Original Sources.

Sections of *The Dialogic Imagination* explore the many facets of interpretation, including the fundamental observation that multiple “languages” exist and interplay when reading and discussing a work

of literature or art. The reader/interpreter has a private lexicon that shares many characteristics of the language used by a society of culture (English, for example). All shared languages are weighted with cultural terms, traditional meanings, and accrued nuance of definition, while aspects of the reader's language are necessarily private and idiosyncratic. The same term can be interpreted in subtly different ways by different readers. A literary work can use multiple forms of verbal expression. Even a plastic work of art seeks an audience by various means of shared and idiosyncratic visual or aural communication.

Reading Bakhtin helps us understand the complex dialogue taking place between the interpreter, the object of interpretation, the object's traditional usage, and the original sources that inform the cultural artifact. An artifact is a reworking of past practice into something new. It lures future observers who will attempt to comprehend and explain it using their own ever-evolving linguistic constructs. It is a marvelous, vital conversation across generations, genres, and linguistic models. Bakhtin's work yields a satisfying irony: as fraught with loss, misplacement, and silence as it is, its rediscovery after his death has instigated a vigorous critical dialogue that continues to this day.

a red wheel barrow

This vitality of conversation is core to our fellowship program. Reflecting on the years I have served on the dissertation review panel, two proposals come to mind that exemplify the dialogic process in different yet compelling fashion. Joana Konova (University of Chicago) framed her research as a study to reveal, through sculpture, the conversant interplay between late Renaissance Rome and its imperial precedent. Through "Antiquity Remade: Aesthetics of Restoration and Display of Ancient Sculpture in late Renaissance Rome," Konova's goal was to complicate the received scholarly narrative that Renaissance artists who restored ancient sculpture were generally misinformed, sometimes reckless and guilty of damaging the original objects, and generally unaware of the complex cultural intentions represented by the ancient sculptures.

Ms. Konova hoped to prove that the Renaissance artists who restored ancient sculpture were cognizant of its ancient cultural and symbolic meaning, and recreated these works with a nuanced, self-aware, and respectful understanding of the traditions within which the original artists were working. Focusing on statuary in the Palazzo Mattei di Giove and the Sala dei Capitani, both in Rome, she would investigate archives of the Renaissance that discuss and describe these works. She would also research the methods the Renaissance archivists used to catalog the earlier Roman sculpture, as archival categories provide excellent clues to how these sculptures were understood and thus interpreted. She would consult ancient records of then contemporary descriptions of the sculptures, study their original compositional techniques and cultural intent, and align these records with the Renaissance archives.

Think of the many layers of conversation in this intriguing proposal. The author, a young scholar, intends to reframe and reinvigorate a widely held theory within the field of art history, focused on two major periods of Western civilization while working within a modern context of assumptions and arguments. The research also assumes a cognitive bridge between ancient Rome and the sixteenth century—a distant dialogue between artists working in the ancient capital and artists and restoration experts of the Renaissance. By studying the records of these two periods, Ms. Konova inserts herself as interlocutor to reassess the degree of sophistication and knowledge the Renaissance artists brought to the restoration of their forebears' work in stone, providing a new narrative and opportunity for future dialogic engagement.

Philip Johnston of Harvard University proposed to undertake the study of ancient potsherds in southern Spain to better understand the economics of a pre-classical, pre-modern period of colonization. "Phoenician and Iberian Economic Interaction of the Orientalizing Period (8th–6th centuries BC)" described research that would focus on what is today western Andalusia, examining archeological evidence for the production and trade of pottery in the region 26 centuries ago. Studying the potsherds would produce a more detailed tracing of the period's production sites, trade routes, and diachronic trends of pottery exchange.

New to the fellowship program was the methodology that formed the basis of Mr. Johnston's analysis: optical petrography. During his year in southern Spain, he would use ICP-MS (Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry), pXRF (portable X-ray Fluorescence Spectrometry), and NAA (Neutron Activation Analysis). His proposal addressed the need to rethink the prevailing scholarly narrative, a stereotypical interpretation of ancient Andalusian colonization based on modern examples of colonialism. Extant research lacked a theoretical component, often relying on superficial description rather than analytical data probing.

Optical petrography includes methods of chemically analyzing archeological artifacts, revealing precise compositional patterns that can be traced and compared to other settlements in the region, in turn producing a temporal and geographical map of trade during the Orientalizing era. This was the first proposal that explicitly aimed to generate and interpret what we have come to call *big data*. It proposed to use machines as intermediaries. "Reading" was accomplished by handheld scanners and probes, while the scholar provided a synoptic intervention to refine our understanding of ancient commodity exchange.

glazed with rain water

As many of us who have conducted research in the humanities appreciate, so much depends on a well-managed library or archive, helpful staff, and a logical organization of knowledge. Under ideal

conditions, hours are posted, promises are kept, and engagement with our subject is perturbed ever so slightly by the soft scratch of a favored pen or click of a muted keyboard. This is often not the case in the experience of our Mellon fellows. Theirs is a more adventurous narrative, replete with unexpectedly locked collections, misleading times of operation, unsharing archivists, capricious rules, labor strikes, gender and ethnicity bias, sweltering climes, snakes, political strife, and rooms of chaotic piles of manuscripts where clean, smartly arranged files were claimed to be housed.

Such conditions further test the ability to negotiate and navigate in a foreign land, in an idiosyncratic dialect, with strangers, but these interactions are equally part of the multilayered conversations that advance research and new discovery. As we move toward an increasingly digital academic environment, scholars who engage with original sources will adapt their interventions to include born-digital objects of cultural significance and to experiment with new tools and resources, but they will also continue to explore, interpret, and find meaning in parchment, potsherds, paper, stone, and oils. The future will likely involve studying a hybrid of media, requiring us to extend our tradition of humanistic inquiry, with all the spirited engagement that this fellowship program nurtures.

As in the past, so it will be for future generations. Scholars will persist in reframing and reimagining our cultural heritage. The act of integrating oneself into the past and respectfully articulating new insight into its workings is foundational to our humanity. Because even the smallest rearrangement has portent, whether the reworked head of an ancient statue or the spectral analysis of clay fragments fired before Rome ascended, these studies will continue to bear and transfer the significant consequence of better understanding our legacy and our potential: research integral to an elegant, timeless conversation that comprehends an ultimately inseparable coexistence of substance, form, and imagination.

beside the white chickens

The eight-line poem "XXII" (also known as "The Red Wheelbarrow"), by William Carlos Williams, was initially published in Williams' collection of poems, *Spring and All*, in 1923.

About the Authors

Nicole Ferraiolo is program officer for scholarly resources at CLIR. She works primarily with the Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives grant program and the Mellon Fellowships for Dissertation Research in Original Sources. Before joining CLIR, Nicole managed multiple programs in the Department of History at Columbia University, including an MA program and an interdisciplinary summer research seminar and speaker series on global governance. She was also involved with early digital humanities initiatives in the department. Previously, she spent two years in French Guiana as an educator and international exchange coordinator in the French Ministry of Education's regional office.

Charles Henry is president of CLIR, where he oversees and provides strategy for the organization's mission. He serves on the advisory board of Stanford University Libraries, and is also a board member of the Center for Research Libraries and a member of the Scientific Board of the Open Access Publishing in the European Network (OAPEN) project. He is coauthor of *Our Cultural Commonwealth: The Report of the American Council of Learned Societies Commission on Cyberinfrastructure for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, and has published widely on topics relating to the humanities and advanced technology.

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Amanda Watson was a member of the first cohort of CLIR Postdoctoral Fellows in Academic Libraries in 2004. She holds a PhD in English from the University of Michigan and an MS in Library and Information Science from Drexel University. She is currently the Librarian for English and Comparative Literature at the New York University Libraries. She recently published an article in the journal *Book History*, and is working on a book project dealing with nineteenth-century American poetry reading habits.