

UNESCO Memory of the World Programme

Sub-Committee on Education and Research (SCEaR)

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2nd, slightly improved edition

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Editorial

by Lothar Jordan

The Golden Letter of King Alaungphaya to King George II of Great Britain (1756) was inscribed into the Memory of the World Register in 2015. It was and is seen as a most interesting document on the relations between Asia and Europe in the 18th century. But, as far as I can see, in the discussions in the Memory of the World Programme the text itself did and does not play a significant role. It seems that the carrier, gold decorated with jewels, covers the content and leaves just a vague idea of this Asian-European communication. The *SCEaR Newsletter* wanted to change that and invited Jacques Leider, top expert on this letter and Corresponding Member of the SCEaR, to comment on this document, its history and the history of its rediscovery, and to present the text and his, Jacques Leider's, translations into English, French, and German. He accepted. We hope that the combination of translations and article facilitate the access to and use of this document in education and research.

Adriano Rigoli, President of the Italian *Associazione Nazionale Case della Memoria (National Historic Homes Association - a Cooperating Institution of the SCEaR)*, which mainly cares about the memorial houses of outstanding personalities, mainly but not only writers, but gives attention to their documents, too, reports about an exhibition on the end of the First World War and some aspects of the treaty of Versailles, that brought peace, but was not able to make peace sustainable. UNESCO was a later answer to the shattered hopes of such treaties.

Sustainability is the task, too, of InterPARES (another of our Cooperating Institutions), a global research project (having started in 1998 on the long-term preservation of digital documents – which is since a long time in the focus of MoW, too. Its director, Luciana Duranti, member of the SCEaR, reports on the construction, development, successes, and protagonists of a regional branch of InterPARES for the Caribbean and Latin America.

The following two articles take up the Special Part of *SCEaR Newsletter* 2018/1: “Memory of the World Knowledge Centres 2018”. They show that the activities of the MoW Knowledge Centres enlarge the reception and the impact of the programme, thus helping to fulfill its tasks. This is shown in Jian (Jenny) Wang's report on the Dunhuang International Conference on the Digitalization of Cultural Heritage and on Digital Humanities, that was co-hosted by the MoW Knowledge Center-Beijing. The author is its coordinator.

And on 7 August 2019 a meeting of all five MoW Knowledge Centres, together with the SCEaR, took place in Suzhou, China. The MoW-Knowledge Centre Suzhou is the youngest one. It opened on 10 November 2018 (see *SCEaR Newsletter* 2018/1, pp. 24-29). All centres gave reports on their work and looked for ways of future cooperation. It will be a major task to make these efforts visible for the world, as they contain quite a number

of best-practice examples, which might be overlooked easily, especially if hidden behind barriers of language.

This newsletter ends with sad news, the passing away of Elizabeth Watson. Roslyn Russell, Alissandra Cummins and Lourdes Blanco who were close to her, remind us of her. I want to add some personal lines. My visit as an observer to the IAC meeting on Barbados (2009), just ten years ago, had a crucial importance for me, as through it I got more and more fascinated by Memory of the World, and got a glimpse of its rich potential. Elizabeth Watson was not only a co-organizer of this event, but for me someone who provided a bridge between the memory institutions and the academic world in MoW, which was not common at that time. Later we tried to win her for her engagement on our way to the MoW Sub-Committee on Education and Research, but she could not take part. Back to 2009: Most of all I remember an evening during the IAC meeting, when Elizabeth Watson had invited all participants to her home and garden. She created a wonderful atmosphere of free discussion and leisure, all joined in sharing the tasks of Memory of the World. The frogs were singing in the trees. It was an unreal real idyll, hardly from this world.

Note: With the task to delete some few mistakes in this newsletter, we provide a second, slightly improved edition (Jan. 2020).

The Golden Letter of King Alaungphaya to King George II of Great Britain (1756).
(With Translations into English, French, and German)

by Jacques P. Leider



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The Golden Letter of King Alaungphaya to King George II of Great Britain was inscribed into the Memory of the World Register in 2015. Its inclusion in MoW resulted from a coordinated submission by three countries in two continents, Germany, the United Kingdom and Myanmar, hinting at the exceptional status of this unique epistolary document. The synchronized move to gain recognition of the Golden Letter as a world-class piece of cultural heritage reflects outstanding good-will between institutions from three nations, but first of all the transnational character of the letter itself, the complex historical context of its production and ultimately, as the present article will also try to show, some of the forgotten links between monarchies and trading companies in the 18th century. The author, who was involved with the re-discovery of the letter and its historical evaluation, recalls the historical background, describes the letter and outlines the conditions under which a North German library became its repository over 250 years ago.¹

¹ See in detail J.P. Leider: *King Alaungmintaya's Golden Letter to King George II (7 May 1756). The Story of an Exceptional Manuscript and the Failure of a Diplomatic Overture*. Hannover: Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek 2009. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:gbv:35-00000303-13>

An unexpected diplomatic initiative of a new Myanmar monarch

In early May 1756, the Myanmar king Alaungphaya sent letters to the East India Company representatives in Myanmar (Cape Negrais) and India (Fort St George, Madras) as well as to the Company's directors in London. A fourth letter, written in Burmese, was sent, together with an English translation, to the British king. It was written on a sheet of pure gold. The golden letter reached King George II in March 1758. About four weeks later, it was forwarded to Germany and registered in the king's private library in Hanover. These few bits of information roughly sketch the transcontinental trajectory of a letter that signified the extraordinary diplomatic initiative of an Asian monarch to reach out to a Western king in the middle of the 18th century. They suffice to raise a flurry of questions about the letter's character, content and the context of its production.

In 1756, Alaungphaya was waging war against the kingdom of Pegu in Lower Myanmar and laying siege to Syriam, the country's most important trading port. He was not entirely sure if he could win the war unless he could avail himself of cannon and ammunition of the same quality which his enemy, the king of Pegu enjoyed thanks to long-standing contacts with foreign traders and notably the French. Who was Alaungphaya? War was raging in Myanmar between a northern (Ava) and a southern kingdom (Pegu) since the south had seceded in 1740. In 1752 Pegu got the upper hand and razed Ava to the ground. However, as soon as the city fell, resistance escalated among the majority people of Myanmar countryfolk who opposed the rule of the mainly Mon people from the south. One leading village headman rose above the others, Aung Zeya, born in Moksobo north of Ava. He took the *nom-de-guerre* Alaungmintaya-phayagyi ("future great king", later shortened by Westerners to "Alaungphaya"), built alliances, successfully led men in battle and reconquered the countryside from the hands of the new rulers and their local allies.

In 1755, his power was firmly entrenched in the area between the Chindwin and Irrawaddy Rivers and he turned his sight down south. A series of religious foundations throughout the Irrawaddy valley soon marked the triumphal progress of his armies. Yet conquering the heartlands of Pegu was still another match. The port of Syriam and the capital were heavily fortified; foreign traders, among them both French and English, played a notable role in the trade with Southern India, and cultivated relations with the Pegu king Banyadala. The "new man" from the north was largely unknown and there were no obvious reasons why in 1755 foreign traders would opt for a political rival. Another theatre of political and economic rivalries was the Indian Ocean. Throughout the 1740s, the French and the English East India companies had been heavily competing to carve out a hegemonic position on the seas and along the coasts. From their political point of view, Lower Myanmar ("Pegu") was just one dot on a larger map where the competition was fired by rival political and economic interests, though private traders who were numerous might not get directly involved. From an economic perspective, teak wood was the most important trade item from Pegu and from a security angle, access to

the natural protection offered by ports of the Eastern Bay of Bengal was a strategic asset during the monsoon season. On top of this, just a few years after the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-48), a new European war broke out in 1756 (“Seven Years’ War”). In terms of the ongoing Franco-British conflict, this war was going to be fought in three continents including Europe, North America and South Asia.

To sum up, it is important to understand how these two war contexts, the North-South political conflict in Myanmar and the Franco-British conflict of East India trade companies overlapped but did not fully tie into each other. The priority of the new king Alaungphaya was to win power over a territory that would allow him to resuscitate the former Myanmar empire of the 16th century. The priority of the English East India Company, on the other hand, was to fight off and humble the French whose influence in India had been on the rise (with the control of fortresses and the building of local alliances with Indian monarchs) and who had built strong relations with the king of Pegu starting from their base in Pondicherry.

Alaungphaya put his bet on the English. It was a bet because in 1755 the East India Company was not yet the regional powerhouse Warren Hastings would create in Bengal during the following years. In 1755, as his troops rapidly advanced south, Alaungphaya had reached out for the first time to the East India Company representatives in Cape Negrais, a settlement created by the EIC at the Western end of the Irrawaddy delta. The reactions were tepid and the outcome (in terms of cannon and munition paid in silver coins) modest. The EIC chief took orders from directors in London and governors in Madras and was not ready to sell lots of cannon - which EIC officers thought the Company might soon need itself - to a local rebel whom they barely knew. Yet Alaungphaya did not give up, because the military situation (notably the siege of Syriam which started in 1755 and lasted until the port’s fall in July 1756) put some urgency on developing his contacts with the English. Alaungphaya was successful building a positive relationship with Henry Brooke, the very young EIC chief in Negrais. Yet what the East India Company wanted on its own behalf was something which the king felt at first not yet ready to deliver, namely a piece of land in Patheingyi (Bassein), a major inland port, where the English wanted to build a stockade and store the teak wood collected from upcountry. A Buddhist pagoda stood on the land and would have to be demolished. Moreover, the English adamantly asked for signing a treaty which would formally exclude, among other stipulations, their French competitors from having access to Myanmar’s ports. In a way, both sides engaged with requests that raised serious concerns for the other side.

To break the deadlock and speed up the process, Alaungphaya had the bold idea to address the British king directly as he wrongly supposed that the East India Company was under his orders. At the same time, he made a clear commitment for the grant of a piece of land in the area where the English wished to raise a settlement. The text of the Golden Letter recalls the good trading relations in the past troubled by the recent war and calls for a mutual commitment of the two kings towards ensuring a bright future for trade relations built on a friendly alliance. Yet while Brooke was a man who displayed a sincere

understanding of the limits of the king's range of action in the context of Syriam's siege in 1755, other officers weren't. Their persistent call for signing a treaty went on, even after the king's four simultaneous letters (to the local chief, the governor in Madras, the directors in London and King George II) were received for dispatch. To cut short the end of the story at this point: by the time King George II received the Golden Letter in March 1758, the political situation was entirely different from what it had been in early 1756. Alaungphaya had won the war, largely without English cannons, he had founded a new dynasty and he kept on further expanding the territory of his kingdom until his death in 1760. He also had signed a treaty with the EIC in 1757, signifying compromise for English legalism despite his disappointment with their apparent disdain for his exquisite letter. However, this was a treaty soon emptied of its promise to improve trade, as the EIC abruptly decided to move out of Myanmar in the same year. As we will see below, Alaungphaya never got a reply from London. The only acknowledgement came from Madras where Governor Pigot gave thanks for the grant of the settlement at Patheingyi and expressed his "extreme desire ... of cultivating a lasting friendship with your Majesty and establishing such a trade between the English and your subjects as may prove equally advantageous to both".

A piece of art of Myanmar's royal chancellery

The golden letter does not only bear witness to an unprecedented diplomatic offensive, but it is also a remarkable item of Myanmar's material culture during the early modern period. Gold was a noble material reserved for royal and sacred purposes. It is unlikely therefore that pieces such as the golden letter were ever issued in great numbers as they would have been sent to fellow kings who were considered as being of comparable consideration as Myanmar's ruler himself. We know about similar pieces sent by Vietnam and Siam to the emperor of China, but the golden letters sent by Myanmar to China were all melted by order of the Qianlong Emperor in the 1790s.

The royal chancellery oversaw the formulation and the writing of orders and letters. Scribes and secretaries were recruited regarding their special qualifications and level of education for drafting and editing edicts. Heads of the chancellery had to be trustworthy men familiar with matters of procedure, etiquette and protocol. Each order, once drafted and edited, had to go through a process of supervision, verification and approval. The Golden Letter was a special piece of diplomatic correspondence drafted by Letwe Nawratha, a well-known poet, adviser and later biographer of King Alaungphaya.

The measurements of the gold plaque in its present condition are 54.7 x 8.5 cm. The elongated rectangular size of the golden letter was inspired by the stretched-out *boryssa flabellifer* palm leaves (used for the king's standard one- or two-line orders), rolled up and sealed for dispatch and easy conveyance. The golden letter, merely 0.2 mm thick, was similarly rolled up and kept in an ivory casket which has been kept together with the letter. The remarkable fineness of the gold, emphasized by the later chronicler in its textual record of the letter, is confirmed by the spectro-analysis attesting a purity varying between 95 and 98%. The letter bears a *hamsa* seal and is decorated at the left and the

right border of the text with two intricate gold ribbons ending in flanges inserted into the gold sheet and bearing each 12 ruby stones. The egg-shaped rubies originate from Myanmar's famous Mogok mines and are fixed in tiny hexagonal gold settings attached with cramps to the two strips. The weight of the gold plaque including the rubies is 100 g. The *hamsa* or Pegu duck appears as a symbolic animal of the Lower Myanmar monarchies most often associated with the early Mon kingdoms (14th-15th c. CE). In the present case, the *hamsa* seal must be considered a symbol of authenticity of the early Konbaung dynasty, too, keen to claim the legacy of Myanmar's wide-spread empires in the Irrawaddy Valley during the 11th-13th and 16th c. CE. The scribe's comment which accompanies the archival version of one of the other three letters reveals some details about the packaging of the golden letter. The letter rolled up and kept in the ivory cask was put into a sealed "golden" pouch. The pouch was placed in a lacquer box bearing a seal with an English text on a piece of paper. The lacquer box was finally inserted into a satchel bearing a Myanmar seal.

The Golden Letter's recent rediscovery in its German repository

In mid-2006, the present author was contacted by F. Hülsmann, a librarian of the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek in Hanover, requesting expert advice on a gold plate which had been registered in Eduard Bodemann's catalogue of the manuscripts of the Royal Public Library at Hanover (*Die Handschriften der Königlichen Öffentlichen Bibliothek zu Hannover*, Hannover, 1867) as the letter of "an independent Indian king on the Coromandel coast (of the religion of the *Magi* or *Gebres*) who do not eat anything alive and who adore the fire". In fact, Hülsmann had recently learned that this golden plate was not bearing Indian, but Myanmar script! Practical arrangements were then made and in April 2007, I travelled to Hanover. The extensive titular formula ending with the king's unique name, Alaungmintaya, clearly identified the mysterious gold plate as the original letter sent to the British court in 1756. No one had ever wondered where it had been archived though it was mentioned in Henry Yule's description of Arthur Phayre's mission to the court of Ava in 1855 (*A Narrative of the Mission to the Court of Ava in 1855*. Kuala Lumpur, 1968) while the eighteenth century English translation, written on a sheet of paper and most probably done in Rangoon ("Copy Translation of a Letter from the King of the Burmars to The King of Great Britain") had been found by D.G.E. Hall in the East India archives (now India Office Collections at the British Library) and reproduced in his article "The Tragedy of Negrais," (*Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. 21, part 3, 1931). The text itself was therefore not unknown and a faint memory of the original had also lingered on. Here it was revealed in its German repository after a fairy sleep of nearly 250 years. But what was the full story behind it and why had it arrived in Hanover? In agreement with the direction of the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek (GWLb), the State Library of Lower Saxony, we kept the "discovery" a secret for the timing which left me ample time to further study the reign of King Alaungphaya both through Myanmar chronicles and East India Company sources. The most enlightening source to understand the man and his rule were the letters and orders of the king himself transmitted in a set of

edited palm leaf manuscripts. The mythology that built later around this famous hero-king is most visible in Shwebo, his place of birth and first capital. Manuscripts, letters, administrative records and seemingly unrelated documents found at the British Library revealed by bits and pieces the process that had led to the writing of the letter and its odyssey from Rangoon to London via Negrais, Madras and Calcutta. In 2009 the final report on the golden letter was handed over to Georg Ruppelt, the GWLB's director. Yet, circumstances further delayed a public presentation and it was only in January 2011 that the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek revealed the Golden Letter to the Hanoverian public, a magnificent event with hundreds of visitors that raised wide regional and international interest in the media. A presentation on the Golden Letter at the Académie des Sciences et Belles Lettres in Paris followed in 2012. Public presentations on the Golden Letter in Myanmar, Germany and France made translations in different languages a necessity. Translations into English, French, and German, together with a transliteration of the original text have also been joined as an annex to the present essay. Following the MoW nomination in 2015 thankfully initiated by Georg Ruppelt, the GWLB received the UNESCO certificate in March 2017. An exhibition on the Golden Letter, successfully organized by the library, was extended until September 2018.

From Rangoon to Bengal, Madras, London and ... Hanover

For the first time in the history of the country, a Myanmar king had decided to communicate directly with a Western monarch. This singular fact makes the letter into an exceptional document. The East India Company wanted a treaty, but Alaungphaya granted them the favor of what was in his view a better and higher ranking written proof of goodwill to promote beneficial relations with the English traders: a golden letter to their king expressing peaceful intentions and granting the traders what they had requested for a long time. However, ill will and a fateful political context played against the king's optimism. The man who received the king's letters was William Anderson, the East India Company's local doctor who was himself seriously ill when he met the king on 8 May 1756. The next person who received the letters in the Company's settlement in Negrais was a Captain Howe, a military man recently appointed to his position as chief, stubborn, brash, and most likely frustrated that the king had still not signed the latest English treaty proposal. It is possible that after reading the letter addressed to himself in his function as chief, Howe willfully delayed the dispatch of the other three letters to Madras. In fact, nothing happened until Howe died a few months later. Curiously, his successor Thomas Newton sent the remaining three letters onwards to Fort William in Bengal. Only from Calcutta, they were then dispatched to Fort St George in Madras, where they arrived in late March 1757. In late July, the governor of Fort St George, Georges Pigot, sent them on the *Walpole* to London where they were delivered to their addressees in March 1758, nearly two years after they had been written. They were presented during the session of the Court of Directors of the East India Company on 3 March 1758. On the same day, John Payne, the chairman of the Directors, failed to meet the Secretary of State, William Pitt, to hand over the Golden Letter to King George. Therefore, he probably left it at

Hampton Court where the king resided and sent explanations about the situation of the Company in Myanmar only the following day. What either King George or William Pitt learnt or thought about the letter is not known to this day. The king took apparently some interest in it, because he decided to send it to his private library in Hanover where it was registered three weeks later on 28 March 1758. But he did not give any instruction to send an acknowledgment or a reply to Myanmar. As the British king did not reply, the Court of Directors likewise did not draft a letter on their own behalf. Alaungphaya's hope to establish friendship with the British at the highest political level died an early death. In 1758 he was, as we have noted, the uncontested ruler of Myanmar further expanding his territory with his own resources. The bitter feelings he held towards the English traders and the anger their lack of respect for his diplomatic initiative provoked more generally at the court, contributed to a rapid deterioration of relations and ultimately to a break-down of communications which lasted for over thirty years.

We may not blame George II for the diplomatic mishap. He nourished a great affection for Hanover, his birthplace, to where he had returned four times between 1729 and 1741. While sending the letter to his private library, he may have thought about it as a kind of exotic curiosity to be treasured. The political nature of the letter had soon evaporated while even its proper identity and place of origins were lost when the letter was sent to Hanover and confusingly registered as coming from India, as ships were known to come from Madras to London. The Golden Letter escaped the attention of researchers for nearly 250 years. Ironically, a project run by researchers at the neighbouring University of Göttingen, founded by George II, to catalogue Burmese manuscripts in German libraries failed to take notice of the letter until it was awakened to another afterlife in 2007 thanks to the zealous curiosity of a librarian.

His research work on the background history of the Golden Letter led the present author to pursue his investigations on King Alaungphaya's biography and the representations of his life in both Myanmar and Western publications of the 19th and 20th century. A number of the king's orders and letters preserved on palm leaf manuscripts, have been edited in Myanmar compilations of royal orders since the 1960s. However, they have never been extensively used by local or international historians and biographers to revise the king's uniform image as a heroic warrior. This is unfortunate as the king was also a remarkable diplomat as the golden letter and many other letters show. While early Western representations drew a positive image from the accessible information on Alaungphaya, during the late colonial period, his image suffered from the generally negative characterization of the dynasty he had founded by imperialist writers. Further study of these primary sources should contribute to a more critical, but also more balanced description, countering the partial perception of a purely ethno-centric figure. It would also enrich the perception of Alaungphaya as a national figure in Myanmar paying attention to his political action outside the record of conquests and victories. Another direction of fruitful research is the study of the king's religious works involving his pagoda and temple foundations and restorations in association with the contemporary configuration of his *persona* as a man of destiny matching Buddhist cosmological notions.

Dr Jacques P. Leider is a historian of Southeast Asia who has specialized in the study of the early modern and modern history of Myanmar. He has been the head of the research centres of the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO, French Institute of Asian Studies) in Yangon and Bangkok since 2017. As the scientific coordinator of CRISEA (Competing Regional Integrations in Southeast Asia, www.crisea.eu), he is at present in charge of an EU-supported project which includes partners in ten European and Southeast Asian countries. - J.P. Leider is a Corresponding Member of the SCEaR.



Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek – Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek.
Source: Wikimedia [copyrighted free use].

Transliteration and translations of the Myanmar letter by Jacques P. Leider

Bhun-tō a-lhvan-krī mrāt-tō-mū lha so Sunāparanta-tuiñ Tampadīpa-tuiñ Kamjoja-tuiñ ca so tuiñ-krī a-poñ-tuiv. nhuik Mran-mā-prañ Rham-prañ Yvan-prañ Kasañ-prañ Taluiñ-prañ rāja-ṭhānī-prañ-krī thīḥ choñ mañ ta-kā-tuiv sakhañ patta // mrā rhve ṇve kreḥ sañ pha-yañ ratanā tvañ myā sakhañ chañ-phrū chañ-nī chañ-kyāḥ cak-krā rhve-lham ra ādicca-vasa ne mañ i achak-anvay achoñ-choñ so rhve-nan rhve-prasad sakhañ Ratanā-pūra-Añva-prañ-krī nhañ. ta-kva Ayujhapūra mañ so Ratanā // singha-kun-bhoñ rhve-prañ-krī kuiv acuiv ra-tō-mū so Aloñ-mañ-tarā-krī khyac-krañ-cvā krā rok ap so jinappattañ Bhañkalā vhat sañ-devī-devī-kat ca so mruiv a-poñ tuiv khrañ rañ lyak Añkarit-mruiv-ma kuiv // a-cuiv ra so Añkarit-mruiv-ma bhurañ bhe-loñ-tō bhuiḥ-loñ-tō tuiv lak-thak mran-mā mañ Añkarit a-chak-chak bhok-kā roñ-vay rok-pok kra rve. a-luiv rhi sa mhya kuiv choñ yū kra ra sañ // Kin-khan a-lyok Taluiñ-tuiñ nhoñ-rhak rā tvañ ta-lap ta-krā ma rok ma pok kra rhi rve. toñ.ta lyak ne sañ nhañ. akrañ-tō nuiñ-ñam-tō cvan-Mō-dhañ-huiñ-krīḥ suiv. akrañ-tō Ankarit mruiv-ma bhurañ ka // Mañ-sa-lī-pa-rut tuiv kuiv ce rve. rok pok lhā rā tvañ mha me-mran rve.krā si ra lhyañ atuiñ thak alvan mañ ekarāj tuiv. vay mruiv. i aṅgā 7 pāḥ tvañ *sakhā* hū so prañ-thoñ-khyañ aṅgā tap sañ phrac khè so arā kuiv // tve. ra pe to. mañ vam-mrok-tō-mū sañ // a-krañ-tō Añkarit mruiv-ma bhu-rañ ka ce sū Mañ-sa-li-pa-rut tuiv ka Pu-sin mruiv tvañ tuik kra sañ-bho svañ thā ne-rā ne rap luiv pā sañ rhi khuiv sañ-tō ū-tañ so kroñ a-krañ-tō Añ // karit mruiv-ma bhu-rañ ka ce rve. lhyok ra sañ phrac sañ a-rhañ khyac-krañ ra mañ kuiv thok rve. kruik rā ne thuiñ ce Pu-sin mruiv tvañ mre-kuiv tuiñ-tā mhat sāḥ rve. Pu-sin mruiv-van tuiv ka khya pe ce sañ // a-krañ-tō Añkarit mruiv-ma bhu-rañ amhūḥ amat Pu-sin mruiv-van // tuiv myak-nhā ñī tañ-chip cā-khyvan-tō pe ap tō mū sañ // prañ-thoñ-khyañ mañ tuiv vay mrāt so achve-khañ mvan koñ tuiv kuiv mhī kra ra sañ phrac mhya ū-sā-bha luiv rhi rā prañ-cum

kra sañ phrac sañ // ñā sā-tō acañ mre-tō achak mrac-tō a-ñvan. akrañ-tō // Añkarit mruiv-
ma bhu-rañ kuiy mre mrac a-cañ rhañ-cvā khyac-krañ kra ra mañ akroñ kuiv sakkarāj 1118
khu ka-chun la-chan 10 rak va-ne. rāja sañ rhve-pe-cā nhañ. khyac-krañ-cvā rok ap so
Añkarit mruiv-ma kuiv acuiv ra so a-krañ-tō Añkarit bhu-rañ

English translation (with annotations)

The most glorious [king], master of all the umbrella-bearing kings in the royal cities of the
Myanma, the Shan,² the Yuan,³ the Manipuri and the Talaing⁴ in the countries of
Sunāparanta,⁵ Tambādīpa⁶ and Kamboja,⁷ lord of ruby, gold, silver, copper, iron, amber and
precious stone mines, lord of the golden palace [with] tiered roofs, descending from the
solar race possessing the golden *cakrā* lance *arindama*, white elephants, red elephants and
elephants of various colours, [I] Alaungmintaya, ruler of the royal city of Ratanāpūra-Ava and
the golden city of Ratanāsingha-Konbhaung⁸ famed as Ayujjhapūra,⁹ convey my kindest
greetings to the English king who rules over the English capital surrounded by such cities as
Chenapattam,¹⁰ Bengal, Fort [St] David¹¹ [and] Devikot.¹²

Under the reigns of my ancestors, the English and the Myanma were trading as much as
they wished.

As destiny would have it, due to the troubles in the Talaing country¹³ [trade] was
interrupted at a time when your esteemed Highness the English King sent Henry Brooke to
settle at the farthest point of our kingdom.

I heard about this after his arrival and am elated at the prospect of friendly relations which
are one of the seven marks of a fortified city in the possession of a great monarch.

Following the humble request of Mr Henry Brooke, sent by Your Esteemed Highness, I have
granted a landing place in Pathein for your ships as requested.

The sealed royal order was handed over in the common presence of the officers of his
Esteemed Highness the English king and the governor of Pathein is in charge to take the
measurements and transfer the land.

² Exonym for Tai people of eastern Myanmar (Shan country).

³ Tai people of northeast Myanmar and northern Thailand (Lanna).

⁴ Exonym found in Myanmar sources for the Mon people of Lower Myanmar.

⁵ Myanmar on the western side of the Irrawaddy River.

⁶ Myanmar on the eastern side of the Irrawaddy River.

⁷ Classic name of the Shan country in Myanmar sources.

⁸ These are two names of Moksobo, Alaungphaya's native village.

⁹ Literally, "the city that is impregnable".

¹⁰ Madras (Chennai).

¹¹ British fort near Cuddalore, hundred-twenty km south of Madras (Chennai). In 1746, it was the British
headquarters for southern India.

¹² Devikot is an ancient city of West Bengal (South Dinajpur). Its appearance in the royal letter is puzzling and seems
to reflect a lack of clear knowledge on the presence of the *East India Company* in India.

¹³ "Talaing country" refers to Lower Myanmar (classic name: Hamsavati, in Western sources known since the
sixteenth century as Pegu). The sentence hints at the war between Alaungphaya's Myanmar troops and the Mon
kingdom of Pegu.

As great friendship prevails between the rulers of our respective countries, your eager wish has been granted.

So that [our] friendship will last until the time of my royal sons, grandsons, great-grandsons and the descendants of the Esteemed English king, [I have sent] this royal letter [written] on a sheet of gold on the tenth day of the waxing moon of Kason in the *sakkarāj* year 1118,¹⁴ a Saturday, to your Esteemed Highness the English king who rules over the English capital.

French translation

Nous Alaungmintaya, excellent roi grâce à nos mérites exceptionnels, maître de tous les seigneurs au parasol des villes royales des Myanma, des Shans, des Yuan, des Manipuri et des Talaing dans les pays Sunaparanta, Tambadipa et Kamboja, seigneur des mines de rubis, d'or, d'argent, de cuivre, de fer, d'ambre et de pierres précieuses, maître des éléphants blancs, rouges et diverses couleurs, seigneur de la lance *cakra* en or *arindama*, descendant de la lignée du soleil, seigneur du palais d'or aux multiples toitures, régnant sur la ville de Ratanapura-Ava et la ville d'or de Ratanasingha-Konbaung réputée comme Ayujjhapura, envoyons nos salutations cordiales au roi anglais qui gouverne la capitale anglaise entourée de villes telles Chenapattam, Bengale, Fort St David et Devikot.

Sous le règne de nos prédécesseurs, les Anglais et les Myanma faisaient autant de commerce qu'ils le voulaient.

Le destin voulut qu'à la suite des troubles surgies dans le pays des Talaing, le commerce fût interrompu à un moment où votre Excellence envoya Monsieur Henry Brooke à Mawdin-Haingyi pour s'établir aux confins de notre royaume.

Nous l'avons appris après son arrivée et nous nous en réjouissons à la vue de rapports amicaux qui sont une des sept marques d'une ville fortifiée sous le gouvernement d'un roi souverain.

Pour donner suite à l'humble requête de Monsieur Henry Brooke, l'envoyé de Votre Excellence estimée, nous avons accordé un terrain à Pathein où vos navires pourront accoster à l'endroit même qu'il demanda.

L'ordre royal certifié par mon sceau a été remis en présence commune des officiers du roi anglais et du gouverneur de Pathein qui a la tâche de mesurer et remettre le terrain.

Grâce aux bonnes relations qui existent entre nous, rois de nos pays respectifs, Votre souhait a été exaucé.

Afin que notre amitié dure jusqu'aux temps de nos fils, petit-fils, arrière-petit-fils ainsi que des descendants de l'estimable roi anglais, nous avons fait parvenir à Votre Excellence le roi anglais qui règne sur la capitale anglaise, cette lettre royale rédigée sur une feuille d'or le dixième jour de la lune croissante du mois de *kason* de l'an *sakkaraj* 1118, un samedi.

¹⁴ 8 May 1756 CE.

German translation

Der äußerst verdienstvolle und hervorragende König Alaungmintaya, Herrscher über alle schirmbedeckten Könige in den königlichen Städten der Myanma [Birmanen], der Shan, der Yuan [Nord-Thailänder], der Manipuri und der Talaing [Mon] in den Ländern Sunaparanta, Tambadipa und Kamboza, Herr der Rubin-, Gold-, Silber-, Kupfer-, Eisen-, Bernstein- und Edelsteinminen, [Herr der] weißen, roten und buntgescheckten Elefanten, Besitzer der goldenen *Cakra*-Lanze *arindama*, Abkömmling des Sonnenklans, Herr des vieldächerigen goldenen Palastes, Herrscher über die königliche Stadt Ratanapura-Ava und die als Ayujjhapura berühmte goldene Stadt Ratanasingha-Konbaung, übermittle [ich] meine freundlichsten Grüße dem englischen König, der über die von Städten wie Chenapattam, Bengalen, Fort St David und Devikot umgebene englische Hauptstadt herrscht.

Unter der Regierung unserer Vorfahren trieben Engländer und Myanma so viel Handel wie sie wünschten.

Der Lauf des Schicksals wollte, dass infolge der Unruhen im Land der Talaing der Handel unterbrochen wurde, dies zu einer Zeit, wo Ihre Königliche Hoheit Herrn Henry Brooke nach Mawdin-Haingyi sandte, um sich am entferntesten Punkt unseres Königreichs niederzulassen.

Wir erfuhren dies nach seiner Ankunft und wir freuen uns darüber mit Hinblick auf ein freundschaftliches Verhältnis, welches eines der sieben Kennzeichen einer befestigten, sich in der Hand eines souveränen Herrschers befindlichen Stadt ist.

Der demütigen Anfrage des Gesandten Eurer geschätzten Hoheit, Herrn Henry Brooke, stattgebend, haben wir den Landeplatz für eure Schiffe in Pathein dort zugestanden, wo er es wollte.

Der mit meinem Siegel beurkundete königliche Befehl wurde dem Offizier des englischen Königs zugesandt und der Gouverneur von Pathein wurde beauftragt, das Land zu vermessen und zu übergeben.

Weil enge Freundschaft zwischen uns, Königen verschiedener Länder, besteht, wurde Ihrem sehnlichen Wunsch stattgegeben.

Auf dass unsere Freundschaft bis in die Zeit unserer Söhne, Enkel und Urenkel wie auch der Nachkommen des geschätzten englischen Königs fortdauert, haben wir diesen auf einem Goldblatt verfassten königlichen Brief am zehnten Tag des aufsteigenden Mondes des Monats *Kason* des *Sakkaraj*-Jahres 1118, einem Samstag, eurer geschätzten Hoheit, dem englischen König, der über die englische Hauptstadt herrscht, zukommen lassen.

Report

“Memoria d’Autore”: a Project to Remember the First World War and the Centenary of the Treaty of Versailles

by *Adriano Rigoli*

In 2018, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War, the Italian national Historic Homes Association *Case della Memoria* promoted and curated *Memoria d’Autore*, a project that had its natural conclusion with an exhibition dedicated to the centenary of the Treaty of Versailles (28th June 1919). The exhibition has been inaugurated on 28th June 2019, exactly 100 years after the signing of the treaty that brought World War I to an end.

The idea of this project is linked to the presence in the *Case della Memoria* network of Montespertoli Castle (Florence), the historic home of Sidney Sonnino, Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Italy during WW I, which houses important original documents from the Paris Conference. Montespertoli Castle is presently the home of Baron Alessandro and Baroness Caterina de Renzis Sonnino and preserves the statesman’s library and an archive full of documents relating to Italy from the nineteenth century to the First World War. Castello Sonnino is hosting until September 30th 2019 the final exhibition of the *Memoria d’Autore* project, with the aim of retracing the vicissitudes of certain Italian personalities connected with the Houses of Memory who, for different reasons, were involved in the war.

The exhibition focuses on two leading figures of Italian political and intellectual life who played decisive roles in the dramatic war experience: Sidney Sonnino and the intellectual Gabriele D’Annunzio, an interventionist leader and multi-decorated military commander of the ‘irregular’ troops which, between 1919 and 1920, occupied the city of Fiume. Through the stories of these two figures and other connected personalities, the exhibition offers insight into the war fought by soldiers, the living conditions on the home front, the post-war international order, and the difficult post-war period in Italy.

The exhibition also offers a rich opportunity for delving into the archives and libraries often found in the constituent historic homes of the Association, or which are connected to them. One of these is the precious collection of books belonging to Casa Cuseni in Taormina (Sicily), which is linked to the names of Robert Hawthorn Kitson and Daphne Phelps and which has recently been specially listed by the Region of Sicily. There are also the manuscripts and first editions of the works of John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron kept in the Keats-Shelley House in Rome. And then there are the journalist Indro Montanelli’s two personal studies which have been rebuilt inside the Palazzo della Volta in Fucecchio (Florence) by the Montanelli Bassi Foundation, not to mention the library filled with manuscripts, incunabula, first editions and autographs of great writers at the Castle of Castiglione del Terziere in Bagnone (Massa Carrara), which was the historic home of the writer, doctor and poet Loris Jacopo Bononi. Moreover, there is the rich library and depository of twentieth-century magazines of the artist and engraver Sigfrido

Bartolini in Pistoia, the Casa Museo Giuliani in Bisceglie (Puglia), with its first original editions of the musician Mauro Giuliani, the Library of Pellegrino Artusi, father of Italian cuisine, which boasts some fifty thousand volumes in its collection in Forlimpopoli, and the seemingly endless archives and libraries of the Vittoriale degli Italiani of Gabriele D'Annunzio.



The exhibition *Memoria d'Autore* at Castello Sonnino

Photo: Historic Homes Association *Casa della Memoria*

Adriano Rigoli is a medieval historian and currently the curator of the Museo della Badia di San Salvatore in Vaiano in Tuscany (Italy), house museum of the Renaissance writer Agnolo Firenzuola (1493-1543). Since 2010 he has been president of the Associazione Nazionale Case della Memoria (National Historic Homes Association) which brings together 78 Italian museum houses of writers, musicians, artists, scientists (www.casedellamemoria.it, also in English) and which is a Cooperating Institution of the SCEaR.

Report

Communicating Research and Enabling its Implementation: The Caribbean and Latin America InterPARES Dissemination (CLAID) Team

by *Luciana Duranti*

The InterPARES research project (inter pares = among peers; InterPARES = International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems – www.interpares.org) began in the fall of 1998 under the auspices and funding of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, with a multidisciplinary international team of co-investigators from Canada and the United States, Europe, Australia, Asia and Africa (see www.interPARES.org). Notably absent were the Caribbeans and Latin America.

The overarching goal of the project was to develop the theory, methodologies, policies and practices for the long-term preservation of reliable, accurate and authentic digital records during and across different generations of technology over time, irrespective of where they are stored, by whom, and in what form. By 2005, the first two phases of the project had produced all kinds of concepts, principles, requirements, guidelines, and models, and its findings and recommendations had had a strong impact on standards, legislation, policies and practices in the countries involved with the project, but Latin America and the Caribbeans seemed untouched by them.

The InterPARES researchers reached the conclusion that the reasons of this situation were: the inadequacy of simple translations into local languages; the need for interpretation of findings based on local culture; the inability of local professionals to explain InterPARES recommendations to their own organizations; concern about the products' downward-scalability and their relevance to small and medium sized and limited resource organizations; and the need for direct discovery and testing of concepts and methods—in other words, the need for local action research and implementation. We needed clear, circumscribed, and achievable goals respecting local priorities; research conducted on location by people who had to implement the findings; coordination between universities and the field researchers; and cooperation among countries sharing similar contexts.

Thus, in March 2005, in La Habana, Cuba, Abdelaziz Abid, then Director of the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme (MoW), and I, Luciana Duranti, Director of InterPARES, agreed that funding was needed for representatives of Caribbean and Latin America countries to become actively engaged with InterPARES research. And this is how the CLAID (Caribbean and Latin America InterPARES Dissemination) Team was born.



La Habana, Cuba, March 2005. How it began: Abdelaziz Abid and Luciana Duranti.

All photos are by the author or taken with the author's camera.

The primary objective of CLAID was to develop in each involved country a local team of records and archival professionals with whom the CLAID team would share the knowledge acquired during its involvement with the InterPARES researchers, disseminate it through conferences in Latin America and articles in local scholarly journals, and implement it through the development of policies, strategies and action plans for local governments, businesses and communities. The method consisted of involving the CLAID team in InterPARES research through two months of full immersion in the research, two weeks of face to face workshops about methods of communication and strategies of implementation, and a year of constant interaction through both the internet and reciprocal visits. MoW funded such programme twice, in 2005 and 2006.

The CLAID team, constituted of six members – from Argentina (Anna Szlejcher), Brazil (Claudia Lacombe, Rosely Rondinelli), Cuba (Arien Gonzales Crespo), Mexico (Alicia Barnard Amozorrutia), and Peru (Aida Luz Mendoza Navarro), travelled to Vancouver to acquire the knowledge developed by InterPARES in the course of its research activities. It then disseminated such knowledge to the Caribbean and Latin American communities in the Spanish and Portuguese languages through translations of InterPARES products; presentations at conferences, workshops, symposia; university courses; creation of local research teams; and case studies. The new local knowledge so developed enabled records management and archival professionals of those regions to maintain and preserve in a trustworthy way the records of their countries that were born in digital form, and to ensure that those who create digital records would do so in such a way that the records would be preservable over the long term regardless of media fragility and technological obsolescence. Indeed, this MoW funded undertaking was so successful

that Brazil and Mexico were able to constitute their own research teams participating as equal partners in the following two phases of InterPARES and to disseminate their findings in the local languages, while the others continued to participate individually.



Vancouver, B.C., Canada, October 2005. The original CLAID Team (from the left: Alicia Barnard, close to Terry Eastwood in the back; Arien Gonzales Crespo, close to Sandy Or in the back and Luciana Duranti in front; Anna Szlejcher, close to Rosely Rondinelli in front and Claudia Lacombe in the back; and Aida Navarro Mendoza, last on the right in front), together with the UBC Team (Terry Eastwood, Sandy Or, and Luciana Duranti).

In 2012, the Memory of the World Programme became a formal research partner of the fourth phase of the InterPARES project, InterPARES Trust (see <https://interparestrust.org/trust/aboutus/transnational>). This followed the intense cooperation that began in 2011 between the MoW working group on Education and Research (MoWEaR – now *MoW SCEaR*) and the University of British Columbia School of Library, Archival and Information Studies that was itself born out of an effort to increase dissemination of research findings worldwide. Such collaboration continues today.

In February 2019, the InterPARES Team decided to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the project in La Habana, Cuba, where the entire idea of a special dissemination team had started, to honour the CLAID Team for its accomplishments from 2005 to the end of 2018.



Luciana Duranti thanking the CLAID Team La Habana, Cuba, 18 February 2019. With CLAID Team members, from left: Arien Gonzales Crespo, Mayra Mena Mugica, Claudia Lacombe, Rosely Rondinelli, Alicia Barnard, Anna Szlejcher, Aida Navarro Mendoza, and Sharon Alexander Gooding.



La Habana, Cuba, 18 February 2019. The CLAID team members together with Berarda Salabarría (National Archives of Cuba, 4th from the left) and InterPARES presenters from Europe, Africa and North America; from left: Hrvoje Stancic (Croatia), Corinne Rogers (Canada), Julie McLeod (U.K.), Arien Gonzales Crespo, Mayra Mena Mugica, Rosely Rondinelli, Claudia Lacombe, Alicia Barnard, Luciana Duranti, Joe Tennis (U.S.A.), Anna Szlejcher, Shadrack Katuu (Kenya), Aida Navarro Mendoza, and Sharon Alexander Gooding.

What follows is a brief summary of the achievements of the CLAID Team presented by its members in Havana.

Mexico – Alicia Barnard

The impact of InterPARES was significant in Mexico. In 2011, the work of the CLAID researchers resulted in the establishment of the first diploma on digital records at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Centro Universitario de Investigaciones Bibliotecológicas). About 70% of the programme content is based on InterPARES knowledge, and this is largely due to the translation into Spanish of the educational material produced by the research project, such as *Records Pathways: Topics on digital materials*. The Spanish version was published by the Archivo General de la Nación with the title *Temas Fundamentales de la Preservación Digital*; the 8 modules are used for all kinds of records and archival educational programs in

Mexico <https://www.gob.mx/agn/articulos/archivosparalagente-coleccion-interpares-temas-fundamentales-de-preservacion-digital?state=published>.

The Mexico researchers who took part in InterPARES 3 and InterPARES Trust projects under the direction of Juan Voutssas completed two case studies – one on the “Preservation Policies of Banco de México” (by A. Barnard and V. Espinosa) and one on “Digital records management and its preservation policies and guidelines for the Federal Elections Court” (by A. Barnard and J. Voutssas); conducted policy studies, such as “Policies for government records produced by a community cloud” (by A. Barnard: <https://interparestrust.org/assets/public/dissemination/abaITRUSTLA02CaseStudyreport.pdf>) and “Open Data and Open Government in Latin America” (by A. Barnard and researchers from other Latin America countries); translated into Spanish the Terminology Database (<https://interparestrust.org/terminology/>, by A. Barnard and J. Voutssas) and several key documents, such as guidelines for records creators and records preservers; and wrote administrative and supporting research documents.

Peru – Aída Luz Mendoza Navarro

The dissemination of the project’s findings and products by Mendoza Navarro took place in Quito (Ecuador) and in Bogotá (Colombia) where she introduced InterPARES to the respective archival communities, thanks to the support of the directors of the National Archives of Ecuador and the General Archives of the Nation of Colombia. What followed in the months and subsequent years, up to the present, was a sequence of conferences in Peru and other countries to which Mendoza Navarro was invited.

The main result of her dissemination activity was the development of professional education of future archivists at the Sedes Sapientiae Catholic University (SSCU). Mendoza Navarro has been a teacher in and coordinator of the Archival and Record Management Program (ARM-Program) located in the Faculty of Sciences of Education and Humanities, which is the only center of higher education in archival science in the country. The content of the courses is entirely based on InterPARES products, especially as it regards diplomatics, appraisal, and preservation of electronic records. InterPARES

research has been an important source for Mendoza Navarra's consultation and writing activities and has been regularly cited in her books and her articles published in various national and foreign media.

Brazil – Rosely Rondinelli and Claudia Lacombe

Rondinelli and Lacombe have been working in partnership with the Brazilian National Archival Council's Digital Records Committee, whose work has been strongly influenced by InterPARES. From the beginning of their studies, the theoretical findings of InterPARES 1 helped understand what a digital record is and how to identify a digital record among the widely diverse digital entities created in the digital environment. Furthermore, they learned that the definition of record and the basic characteristics of a record are the key not only to identify them among other digital entities, but also to define a preservation plan for them. In the Committee, their first task was to prepare a glossary of archival and IT terms to guide professionals from both areas. This glossary was largely based and influenced by the first InterPARES Terminology Database (http://www.interpares.org/ip2/ip2_terminology_db.cfm).

They also learned from InterPARES that digital preservation has to start at the moment of creation of records, and that the best way to certify the authenticity of digital records over time is to rely on controlled procedures and on a trusted recordkeeping systems. Thus, they realized that their initiatives had to be directed to digital records management. Therefore, some normative instruments were formulated by the National Archival Council to guide the management of digital records and their transfer for permanent preservation to the archives, which includes metadata definition. The "Benchmark requirements supporting the presumption of authenticity of electronic records" formulated by InterPARES 1 (http://www.interpares.org/display_file.cfm?doc=interpares_book_k_app02.pdf) was the basis of the regulations, while "A framework of principles for the development of policies, strategies and standards for the long-term preservation of digital Record," developed by InterPARES 2 ([http://www.interpares.org/ip2/display_file.cfm?doc=ip2\(pub\)policy_framework_document.pdf](http://www.interpares.org/ip2/display_file.cfm?doc=ip2(pub)policy_framework_document.pdf)), was the basis for the Digital Preservation Policy of the National Archives which guided its Digital Preservation Program, started on 2010, called AN Digital.

AN Digital is strongly influenced by the InterPARES Project. The Preservation Policy was the first document to formalize concepts and principles. After that, the Program advanced significantly and InterPARES had an impact on all definitions and decisions of the Archives. The "Benchmark and the Baseline requirements for Authenticity" were an important guide for the definition of procedures for receiving the records, determining the metadata that must be sent with the records, and establishing processes for the maintenance, preservation and access of records in the archival repository.

The direction of TEAM Brazil in InterPARES 3 and InterPARES Trust was supported by the Brazil National Archives, which served as the headquarters for the TEAM, the main co-investigators, and the administrative assistants. The test-bed partners provided

researchers from their own staff to work on each case study. Some TEAM Brazil researchers were archivists but most were IT professionals or employees involved in the activities that created the records, or with the records management system under study. As the majority of researchers were not archivists nor had much knowledge of digital preservation, the first activities of TEAM Brazil were workshops explaining archival and digital preservation basics, InterPARES 1 & 2 findings, as well as the project methodology proposed for carrying out the case studies.

When the studies were completed, the researchers realized that they had improved their knowledge in digital preservation and the management of digital records. They put InterPARES theory into practice and this proved to support them. The Diplomatic Analysis template was a very useful guide to creators and preservers in identifying the weakness of the digital entity under study, and this helped them define the actions that had to be performed to guarantee the long term preservation of authentic records. TEAM Brazil concluded nine case studies and all the final reports are available on the InterPARES web site in Portuguese and in English. When the fourth phase of InterPARES began (www.interparestrust.org), Brazil was represented again. The TEAM at the National Archives developed one case study: “Preserving records and managing their lifecycle in a multi-provenance digital government environment – a case study on a government electronic system: SIGEPE” https://interparestrust.org/assets/public/dissemination/IPT_LA01_Report_eng_2017.pdf), and contributed to the terminology database.

Argentina – Anna Szlejcher

From the beginning of her participation in the CLAID Team, Anna Szlejcher began to develop the topic “Gestión de Documentos Digitales” for the courses offered by the program on *Gestión de Documentos y Archivos Administrativos e Históricos* of the Licenciatura en Archivología de la Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. Soon a postgraduate course was developed on that basis: “Documentos electrónicos” (2006), in the Facultad Politécnica de la Universidad Nacional de Asunción, Paraguay.

Anna Szlejcher incorporated the knowledge acquired during her participation in InterPARES in her master’s thesis, entitled *Protección del Patrimonio Documental Argentino. La incidencia de la Legislación sobre documentos Digitales*, which was declared of *Interés Cultural* by the Secretaría de Cultura de la Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Córdoba in 2013 (Resolución N° 00103 del 20 de septiembre de 2013) and published in 2016, with a preface by Luciana Duranti (154 p. ISBN 978-987-42-1882-7. Córdoba, Argentina).

Szlejcher conducted several research projects based on InterPARES, funded by the Secretaría de Ciencia y Técnica de la Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. They are: “La preservación de la Autenticidad de los Documentos de Archivo en Sistemas Electrónicos en la Formación de los Archiveros” (2006/07); “Un estudio de caso para aplicar los requisitos de InterPARES en la preservación de la autenticidad de los recursos documentales en soporte digital” (2008/09); “La Interdisciplina en la Gestión de la Información. Metodología, Herramientas, Prácticas” (2010-2011); and “Lineamientos

estratégicos para el Acceso, Gestión, Descripción y Preservación de Documentos Digitales” (2012-2013).

Anna Szlejcher also supervised theses based on InterPARES and spoke at several conferences about its findings. She was a co-investigator in InterPARES Trust (2013-2019).

Cuba – Arien Gonzales Crepo and Mayra Mena Mugica

Cuba was not an active participant in InterPARES research but contributed to it, in the spirit of the CLAID Team, by disseminating its results, embedding them in archival practice, and incorporating them in university teaching. More than 60 doctoral and master’s theses at the Faculty of Communication of the University of Havana were based on InterPARES products. Finally, Arien and Mayra were very gracious and generous hosts of the InterPARES 20th Anniversary Symposium.

Conclusion

Fourteen years after its creation, the CLAID Team continues to work with vigor and passion on the dissemination of knowledge about digital records and the preservation of their trustworthiness and accessibility in the long term. There is no question in my mind that, among the many initiatives taken by the MOW program, this is the one that has had the most widespread and enduring effects, as it continues to build knowledge in Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries and to enable records and archives professionals in those regions to develop new methods and practices based on a shared understanding of the digital world.

Dr. Luciana Duranti is a Professor of archival theory, diplomatics, and the preservation of digital records in the master’s and doctoral archival studies programs of the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies of the University of British Columbia. She is Director of the Centre for the International Study of Contemporary Records and Archives (CISCRA—www.ciscra.org) and of the InterPARES research project on the long-term preservation of authentic electronic records (1998-2019—www.interpares.org). Luciana Duranti is a Member of the MoW SCEaR.

Report

Memory of the World Knowledge Center-Beijing Co-hosted the Dunhuang International Conference on the Digitalization of Cultural Heritage (DH2019)

by Jian (Jenny) Wang and Xiaoshuang (Yolanda) Jia



Mogao Grottoes near Dunhuang: Participants in front of the Nine-Storey-Temple, enclosing Cave 96.

Photo: Dunhuang Academy

The Dunhuang (DH2019) International Conference on the Digitalization of Cultural Heritage & the Annual Conference of Specialized Committee for Digital Humanities of the China Society for Social Science Information was held on 5-7 July 2019, at the Dunhuang Academy, China. The Dunhuang Academy is situated about 25 km from Dunhuang centre, close to the Mogao Cave Temples, which is a World Cultural Heritage site. Situated at a crossroads of the Silk Routes, they were a Buddhist cultural centre for more than a thousand years (4.-14. c.). About a thousand caves (some hundred still intact) were cut into desert rocks, and embellished with outstanding wall paintings and statues. The caves contained furthermore an enormous ancient collection of manuscripts of different languages and translations. It was dispersed about a hundred years ago and is the basis today for the International Dunhuang Project, a pioneer concerning the use of the internet for education and research. Under this aspect and under that of synergies

between the different forms of heritage, the participation of the MoW SCEaR seemed important for a possible opening of doors for further cooperation.

Jointly organized by the Dunhuang Academy, Wuhan University, Renmin University of China and Shanghai Library, around 260 experts and scholars in the fields of digital heritage, information technology, archives, library and information management attended the conference. The speakers came from the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan and China.

The topics of the conference were:

1. Theories, methods and technologies of cultural heritage digitization.
2. Information organization and knowledge organization for digital humanities.
3. Digital humanities research based on the digital resources of cultural heritage.
4. Construction and management of smart data in the field of cultural heritage.
5. Construction and application of Knowledge Graph in the field of cultural heritage.
6. Linked data for cultural heritage.
7. Semantic representation, enhancement and modeling for cultural heritage.
8. Open access and digital preservation of digital resources of cultural heritage.

The School of Information Resource Management in Renmin University of China as well as the MoW Knowledge Center-Beijing contributed to this big event two organization committee members, and invited two overseas speakers (Lothar Jordan, SCEaR, who presented on “Memory of the World and Digital Humanities: The Significance of Pragmatics for the Intercultural Mediation of Documentary Heritage”, and Simon Mahony, University College London. The MoW Knowledge Center-Beijing provided furthermore two opening ceremony speakers (Lothar Jordan, Huiling Feng), a keynote speaker (Huiling Feng) and two session chairs (Bin Zhang, Jian [Jenny] Wang).

Two new translations of books about digital humanities were presented during the conference: *Digital Humanities: The Game Rules for Changing Knowledge Innovation and Sharing* by Anne Burdick, Johanna Drucker, Todd Presner and Jeffrey Schnapp, translated by Linqing Ma from the MoW Knowledge Center-Beijing, and Ruohua Han, a doctoral student at the University of Illinois; and *Digital Humanities: Knowledge and Critique in the Digital Age* by David M. Berry and Anders Fager Jord, translated by Xiaoguang Wang from Wuhan University, Li Niu from MoW Knowledge Center-Beijing and other colleagues.

Follow-up workshop at the MoW Knowledge Center-Beijing



Opening Ceremony of the workshop, MoW Knowledge Center-Beijing, Renmin University of China, 9 July 2019

From right to left: Dean Bin Zhang; Director of the Center for Teaching Development of Renmin Univ. Hongjie Tian; Former Vice-President of Renmin Univ. Huiling Feng; Lothar Jordan; Jian (Jenny) Wang.

Photo: Jingyi (Angelica) Zeng

Invited by the Memory of the World Knowledge Center-Beijing, Lothar Jordan, Chair of the MoW Sub-Committee on Education and Research, visited the Center which is located in the School of Information Resource Management at Renmin University of China, and delivered a speech entitled “Perspectives of Education and Research in the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme (World Documentary Heritage)” to 39 young scholars from 28 Chinese universities. For the preparation of the workshop he had asked, together with Jian (Jenny) Wang, the participants to prepare some presentations in group work on matters such as key terms of MoW; analyzing a commentary of the *World Digital Library*; and providing short information (for foreigners) on Chinese documents that may be visible on the Internet. These presentations were shown and discussed in the workshop.

Jian (Jenny) Wang, professor at the School of Information Resource Management in Renmin University of China, coordinator of the Memory of the World Knowledge Center-Beijing, Vice President of the Steering Committee of ICA-cSAE, representative of iSchool at Renmin University of China.

Xiaoshuang (Yolanda) Jia, assistant professor at the School of Information Resource Management in Renmin University of China, researcher of the Memory of the World Knowledge Center-Beijing.

Report

First Working Session of the Memory of the World Knowledge Centres (Suzhou, 7 August 2019)

by Lothar Jordan and Helen Jeong

The inauguration of the Memory of the World Knowledge Centre-Macau in 2016 was the start of the creation of a new network of institutions dedicated to the Memory of the World and the documentary heritage. By 2018 four more MoW Knowledge Centres had been created.¹⁵ Seated in Macau S.A.R., South Korea, and Mainland China, they indicate the significance that is given to documentary heritage in Asia, and show a leadership in opening new doors for MoW.

世界记忆项目学术中心第一次工作会议

First Working Session of the Memory of the World Knowledge Centers

2019.8.7 中国·苏州



Photos: Memory of the World Knowledge Center-Suzhou

Hosted by the SCEaR, the National Archives Administration of China (NAAC), the Chinese National Committee for Memory of the World, and organized by the Memory of the World Knowledge Center-Beijing and the Memory of the World Knowledge Center-Suzhou, the first “Working Session” of all MoW Knowledge Centres took place in Suzhou (China) on 7 August 2019, moderated by the chair of the SCEaR. It was the task

¹⁵ See the reports by R. Russell in *SCEaR Newsletter* 2016 (on Macau), D. Macaskill in *SCEaR Newsletter* 2017/3 (on Beijing) and the Special Part MoW Knowledge Centres in *SCEaR Newsletter* 2018 (on Andong, Fuzhou [Fujian], and Suzhou).

of the meeting to share and to reflect their experiences, and to develop plans for a future cooperation of these centres. All centres were represented by their heads and further staff: the host Suzhou among others by Bu Jianmin, Macau by Helen Jeong, Andong by Sangho Lee, Beijing by Dean Zhang Bin and Assistant Dean Wang (Jenny) Jian, and Fuzhou (MoW KC-Fujian) by Yan Zisen. Co-host NAAC¹⁶ was represented by Wang Hongmin and Li Wendong.



(From left:) Chairing the meeting: Zhang Bin (Director, MoW Knowledge Center-Beijing), Wang Hongmin (Director, NAAC), Lothar Jordan (Chair, MoW SCEaR), Li Wendong (NAAC; rapporteur). – Helen Jeong (Director, MoW Knowledge Centre-Macau); Bu Jiangmin (Director, MoW Knowledge Center-Suzhou) and his team report.

All centres gave impressive reports on their work, some already in a printed form. Their work included quite a number of publications, public and academic events, cooperation with archives, and with ICA, universities, academies,¹⁷ and schools.

The MoW KCs want strengthen their international impact and to help a wider audience that is interested in MoW and e.g. its Registers to find better information and gain a better understanding of this documentary heritage. Therefore they looked for cooperative means of communication and information that may be apt for that purpose. That includes exploring the possibilities of creating a joint website and database. It would be a help for

¹⁶ Its Deputy Director General, Wang Shaozhong, had, together with the Vice Mayor of Suzhou, Wang Yang, opened the event in the plenum.

¹⁷ See e.g. the report by J. Wang and X. Jin in this *SCEaR Newsletter*, pp. 26-29.

education and research on MoW and other documentary heritage work to collect bibliographical data of all significant books and articles, including Ph D dissertations and Master theses. The MoW KC-Beijing is ready to develop a concept.

Exhibition exchanges can be another tool of cooperation, like the cooperation between the MoW KC Macau and the MoW KC-Fujian, planning to join in organizing a seminar and exhibition "Memory of the World and Maritime Silk Road" in November 2019. The activity is to focus on the archival and documentary heritage reflecting the memory of the "Maritime Silk Road" in Fujian and Macao, expecting to promote further exchanges and to win more and more parts of society for the care of documentary heritage. All agreed to strengthen seminars, workshop, academic lectures, and publications on MoW and documentary heritage, to strengthen as well professional and academic knowledge on MoW and documentary heritage as well as public awareness of their significance for society. Parallel to this event an "International Seminar on Memory of the World Program: A Journey in Progress" took place, hosted by the NAAC, the Chinese National MoW Committee, and organized by Suzhou Archives and the MoW Knowledge Center-Suzhou. It provided interesting presentations, mainly, but not exclusively on inscribed items of the MoW Register, and reports on experiences on past nominations and reflections on possible future ones by Ray Edmondson, Wang Hongmin, Helen Jeong, and others.

Both events were accompanied by an exhibition on Chinese documents that were inscribed into the MoW International and MOWCAP Regional Registers.

Dr habil Lothar Jordan is Professor of Modern German Literature and Comparative Literature (retired), and former director of a literature museum. He took over the task to create a MoW Working Group Education and Research in 2011. It turned into the MoW IAC Sub-Committee on Education and Research (SCEaR) in 2013. Since then Lothar Jordan is Chair of the SCEaR.

Dr Helen H.K. Jeong is Director of the Executive Board of the Macau Documentation and Information Society (SCEaR Cooperating Institution), and Director of the Memory of the World Knowledge Centre-Macau.

Obituary

Vale Elizabeth Watson 1945-2019

by Roslyn Russell, Alissandra Cummins and Lourdes Blanco



Elizabeth Watson

Photo: Barbados Museum and Historical Society

A long-standing and highly valued member of the UNESCO Memory of the World community, Elizabeth Watson, passed away in Barbados on 27 March 2019.

Born in Jamaica, Elizabeth Watson made her home in Barbados, where she made her mark as a librarian and archivist, and as a musicologist specialising in the musical genres of the Caribbean – reggae, soca and spouge.

Having gained a Bachelor's degree at the University of the West Indies (UWI), she obtained a Master's degree in Library and Information Science from Long Island University, USA. After her retirement, she completed a doctoral thesis on the life and

music of Barbadian musician, the late, great Jackie Opel, the creator of the musical genre known as spouge, and was awarded a PhD in Cultural Studies from UWI in 2016.

Elizabeth began her career at the UWI Cave Hill campus, Barbados, in August 1968, as a library clerk, and was promoted to professorial level in 2007, retiring seven years later in 2014. Over her nearly 50-year career at UWI Cave Hill she developed the largest tertiary-level audiovisual collection in the Anglophone Caribbean, curating over 22,000 items between 1979 and 2008. Now part of the Sidney Martin Library, the unit was officially named the Elizabeth Watson Audiovisual Unit in September 2014, as a tribute to her outstanding achievements in the field. In addition, she developed UWI's Medical and Cultural Studies collections, and established the Eugenia Charles, Nita Barrow and George Lamming collections. Elizabeth was also instrumental in the inscription of UWI Cave Hill campus collections, the Federal Archives fonds and the Nita Barrow Collection, on the UNESCO Memory of the World International Register.

Elizabeth made a significant contribution to the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme, as founding Chair of the Barbados Memory of the World National Committee, and active representative of the Anglophone Caribbean on the Memory of the World Regional Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (MOWLAC) from 2006 as a member, and as Vice President from 2007 to 2009. She afterwards served as Adviser to MOWLAC from 2014-2019. Elizabeth was responsible, with Alissandra Cummins, for organising the first-ever international initiative to assist nominators in preparing their nominations for Memory of the World registers, when a workshop for potential nominators from the Caribbean sub-region of MOWLAC was held in Saint Lucia in 2007.

Attendees at the workshop were assisted by Memory of the World experts and historians, and several successful nominations to the Memory of the World International Register, including the Federal Archives fonds from Barbados and the Papiamentu Catechism from Curaçao, resulted from that workshop. The model pioneered in Saint Lucia was adopted two years later by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, with an Asia-Pacific workshop in Korea in 2009, and has been replicated across the world since that time by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, UNESCO national, regional and cluster offices in the Asia-Pacific region, and documentary heritage institutions in China and Macau.

The 9th meeting of the UNESCO Memory of the World International Advisory Committee (IAC) was held in Barbados in July 2009, and Elizabeth played a key role in its organisation. IAC members, guided by Elizabeth's expert knowledge of the Barbadian musical scene, enjoyed concerts held as part of the island's annual Crop Over cultural festival. The IAC and observers were also hosted by Elizabeth to dinner at her home, where they enjoyed a magnificent Caribbean banquet. As her colleague and friend



Elizabeth Watson (left) and Alissandra Cummins, during the 9th IAC meeting, Barbados, July 2009.

Photo: Roslyn Russell

Alissandra Cummins recalls, “Elizabeth was a passionate advocate for Caribbean culture and heritage, and most particularly its music. As the IAC was being held in the Latin America and the Caribbean region she was determined to ensure that it would be a memorable occasion and many participants still recall that event as a signal experience in their professional lives.”

Immediately preceding the 9th IAC meeting, Elizabeth and the Barbados Memory of the World National Committee organised a one-day Caribbean sub-regional workshop which for the first time aimed to develop joint nominations across countries and regions. Taking advantage of the presence in Barbados of several members of the Memory of the World Register Sub-Committee, and other experts, along with an invited guest from the National Archives of Fiji, Setareke Tale, the workshop began to develop two large-scale joint nominations that were inscribed on the Memory of the World International Register in 2011 – the Records of the Indian Indentured Labourers, from Fiji, Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago; and Silver Men: West Indian Labourers on the Panama Canal, from Barbados, Jamaica, Panama, Saint Lucia, the United Kingdom and United States of America. This successful strategic approach became a collaborative model for others to follow.

Retirement did not leave Elizabeth with time on her hands. Following her recruitment in 2015 to conduct research on behalf of the University of the West Indies/Barbados Museum and Historical Society for their joint project, the Dictionary of Barbadian Biography, Elizabeth not only produced invaluable material for other researchers in the project, but eventually took over the authorship for the biographies of almost 50 performers and musicians, conductors and band leaders, some of whom she rescued from virtual obscurity for the first time since their deaths a decade or more earlier.

Only months before she passed away, Elizabeth attended the first UNESCO Memory of the World Inter-regional Conference on Preservation and Accessibility of Documentary Heritage, held in Panama City from 25-26 October 2018 (see Yolia Tortolero's report in the *SCEaR Newsletter* 2018). One of the objectives was to foster co-operation among the members of the Memory of the World community, and delegates from MOWCAP enjoyed their discussions with Elizabeth at the conference. They, and all who knew Elizabeth and the contribution she has made, were saddened to hear of her passing, and salute her memory as one of the outstanding personalities of the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme.

Lourdes Blanco, former Adviser to MOWLAC, has added her personal appreciation of Elizabeth Watson:

“Elizabeth was all style and wisdom. Ever since I first met her during the MOWLAC meeting in Bogota, in 2005, I was impressed with her sense of style and in many meetings thereafter, I continued to admire her other attributes, such as a professional generosity, rigorous sense of what regulations are all about, in the context of Memory of the World, and clarity as to the goals and means. She was a quiet enthusiast and highly sensitive to cultures and their human origins and engineering, and was instrumental in the growing number and increasing quality of the nominations which came out of the Caribbean, to which she devoted much time and energy. In our last interchange, a couple of weeks before her death, she mailed me her concerns over the situation in Venezuela. She had already turned in her beautiful editing of all the texts pertaining to the English language Caribbean inscriptions in the MOWLAC Register, destined for the book. Despite her very busy schedule, she had agreed to help me in this endeavour in order to contribute to the forthcoming MOWLAC publication. Her acuity and equilibrium will be sorely missed, but her sharpness and intelligence will be long remembered.”

Dr Roslyn Russell was a member of the MoW International Advisory Committee (IAC) 2005-2013; Chair of the Register Sub-Committee (RSC) 2005-2009; and IAC Chair 2009-2013. She is a member of the RSC and SCEaR; and Australian MoW Committee Chair.

Alissandra Cummins is Director of Barbados Museum and Historical Society. She was President of ICOM 2004-2010; IAC Chair 2007-2009; Chair of UNESCO Executive Board 2011-2013; and is Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of Intangible Heritage*.

Lourdes Blanco, Venezuelan curator and conservator, served as rapporteur of MOWLAC between 2000 and 2004, acting as adviser for fifteen years and as compiler of its forthcoming book. She has been a member of the RSC since 2006.

UNESCO Memory of the World Programme

Sub-Committee on Education and Research (SCEaR)

SCEaR Members: Lothar Jordan (Germany), chair; Roslyn Russell (Australia), rapporteur; Papa Momar Diop (Senegal), Luciana Duranti (Canada), Martin Porter (UK)

SCEaR Working Group Schools, Coordinators: Lothar Jordan and Martin Porter

Network of SCEaR Partners: 1. Cooperating Institutions 2. Corresponding Members

https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/mow_scear_network_institutions.pdf

https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/mow_scear_network_members.pdf

The UNESCO Memory of the World Programme (MoW) was created in 1992 in order to foster the documentary heritage by facilitating its preservation, assisting universal access, and raising awareness worldwide of its significance and value. It keeps an International and other Registers of significant documents and collections, and carries out or participates in digitization projects, internet projects, workshops/conferences, publications etc.

It is steered by an International Advisory Committee (IAC), appointed by the Director General of UNESCO. The SCEaR is one of its Sub-Committees. Its tasks are to develop strategies and concepts for institutionalizing education and research on Memory of the World, its registers and the world documentary heritage in a sustainable manner in all forms of institutions of higher learning as well as in schools, and to help develop innovative curricula and research on Memory of the World and/or on documents, especially in an interdisciplinary and international manner and related to the internet. It is a specific characteristic of the SCEaR that it develops and fosters a network of partners (“Cooperating Institutions” and “Corresponding Members”) that are ready and in the position to work for the tasks of the SCEaR, coming from different disciplines and regions and representing different forms of academic and of memory institutions.

Website: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/memory-of-the-world/about-the-programme/international-advisory-committee-iac/sub-committee-on-education-and-research/>

SCEaR Newsletter

Editors: Lothar Jordan (editor-in-chief), Roslyn Russell, Martin Porter, Papa Momar Diop (French texts)

Note: According to the general use in MoW, academic titles and degrees (Prof, PhD, Dr, MA, etc.) are mentioned only in author’s bios, or if they have a special function in a text. - In general, the *SCEaR Newsletter* – like UNESCO – uses British English; of course, with the exception of citations and names of institutions and projects.

If you would like to receive the *SCEaR Newsletter* or to offer an article, send an e-mail to one of its editorial addresses: Jordan.MoW@gmx.de ros@rrmuseumservices.com.au French: dpmomar@yahoo.fr

The *SCEaR Newsletter* is visible on the website of UNESCO:

<https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/memoryoftheworldsceanewsletter2016.pdf>

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