

Archival Research in Germany

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1. Formal Definition of the concept “Archive.”

“An organized collection of the noncurrent records of the activities of a business, government, organization, institution, or other corporate body, or the personal papers of one or more individuals, families, or groups, retained permanently (or for a designated or indeterminate period of time) by their originator or a successor for their permanent historical, informational, evidential, legal, administrative, or monetary value, usually in a repository managed and maintained by a trained archivist (see this example). Also refers to the office or organization responsible for appraising, selecting, preserving, and providing access to archival materials.

Archives can be classified in three broad categories:

- government archives (example: National Archives and Records Administration),
- in-house archives maintained by a parent institution, and
- collecting archives (manuscript libraries, film archives, genealogical archives, sound archives, personal archives, etc.).

The term is also used in academia to refer to a repository of electronic preprints, working papers, and similar documents, commonly called e-print archives. Used in this sense, there is no implication of archival management, which has caused some confusion, for example, around the purpose of the Open Archives Initiative (OAI).”

From: Joan M. Reitz. ODLIS Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science.
http://www.abc-clio.com/ODLIS/odlis_A.aspx

2. Scanning the Landscape of Archives in Germany (Directories).

The best online source of information for understanding the landscape of archives in Germany is the website of the Archivschule Marburg <http://www.archivschule.de/>:

Directory to Archives:

- Archive im Internet <http://www.archivschule.de/DE/service/>
- Archive in Deutschland <http://www.archivschule.de/DE/service/>

The subject search "[Archives -- Germany](#)" in the catalogs for Duke, TRLN, Worldcat, or KIT, brings up print directories and other scholarly treatments.

3. Types of Archives in Germany.

The German archive system is complex because of the eventful administrative history of Germany. German archives are decentralized and it is useful to understand some organizational terms that identify the scope of an archive within a region or time period.

Public Archives

State Archives

Bundesarchiv:

<http://www.bundesarchiv.de/index.html.en>

Metasearch: ARGUS <http://startext.net-build.de:8080/barch/Midosasearch/search.htm>

- Bundesrepublik Deutschland (ab 1949)
- Deutsche Demokratische Republik (1949-1990)
- Alliierte Besatzungszonen (1945-1949)
- Deutsches Reich: Nationalsozialismus (1933-1945)
- Deutsches Reich: Weimarer Republik (1918-1933)
- Deutsches Reich: Kaiserreich (1871-1918) einschließlich Norddeutscher Bund (1867-1871)
- Deutscher Bund (1815-1866) und Provisorische Zentralgewalt (1848/49)
- Heiliges Römisches Reich (1495-1806)

Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes

http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/AAmt/PolitischesArchiv/Uebersicht_node.html

Archiv BStU: Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen DDR

http://www.bstu.bund.de/DE/Home/home_node.html

Archivgut der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED) und des Freien Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes (FDGB)

<http://www.bundesarchiv.de/sed-fdgb-netzwerk/>

Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz

<http://www.gsta.spk-berlin.de/>

Archiv der Stiftung Bundeskanzler-Adenauer-Haus

<http://www.adenauerhaus.de/>

Regional Archives

On the level of the “State” in the sense of “Land/Bundesland” add the name of the German State to find the relevant regional archive, or look at the A-Z list in the Marburg directory (Tab Service at <http://archivschule.de/DE/home/startseite.html>)

- Hauptstaatsarchiv HstA
- Landeshauptarchiv
- Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe
- Kreisarchive
- Stadtarchive

Private Archives

Before starting a search on materials, try to understand the producer of the information, the audience and the purpose, because that may naturally lead you to a particular type of archive:

- Adelsarchive
- Privatarhive
- Kirchliche Archive
 - Landeskirchenarchive
 - Pfarrarchive
- Wirtschaftsarchive
- Archive politischer Stiftungen
 - CDU: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
 - SPD: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
 - Grüne: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung
 - Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung
- Vereinsarchive
- Universitätsarchive
- Medienarchive
- Literaturarchive
- Other Special focus archives
- Institutional Repositories (IR)+: Repositories offer Open Access content, including recent dissertations; repositories are also assuming some of the functions of the traditional university archive for electronic content; DSPACE is the Duke Repository. Many German universities offer Open Access dissertations housed by their IR.

4. Literary Archives/Literaturarchive.

Below are a few examples of literary archives that have a strong Internet presence. There are several hundred literary archives that are documented in archival guides and handbooks; for example, look at the listings in: Blinn, Hansjürgen. Informationshandbuch Deutsche Literaturwissenschaft.

Perkins/Bostock Reference: Z2231 .B57 2005, pages 265-318.

Some larger research centers:

Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach <http://www.dla-marbach.de/>
Note the American Friends of Marbach (AFM) <http://www.afdlam.org>

Österreichisches Literaturarchiv
http://www.onb.ac.at/sammlungen/litarchiv/literaturarchiv_allgemeines.htm

Das Schweizerische Literaturarchiv SLA
<http://www.nb.admin.ch/sla/index.html?lang=de>

A selection of centers around authors or topics with online presence:

- Archiv der Akademie der Künste, Berlin
- Archiv des Heinrich-Heine-Instituts Düsseldorf
- Deutsches Exilarchiv 1933-1945 der Deutschen Bibliothek Frankfurt/Main
- Die Vieweg-Archive der Universitätsbibliothek Braunschweig
- Exil-Archiv Virtuelles Zentrum der verfolgten Künste
- Goethe und Schiller Archiv Weimar
- Hans-Fallada-Archiv
- Kempowski-Archiv
- Kleist-Archiv-Sembdner der Stadt Heilbronn
- Lippisches Literaturarchiv
- Literaturarchiv Sulzbach-Rosenberg
- Literaturarchiv und Bibliothek Monacensia in München
- Literaturhaus Wien; note list <http://www.literaturhaus.at/index.php?id=7037>
- Schiller-Nationalmuseum / Deutsches Literaturarchiv (SNM / DLA)
- Theodor Fontane Archiv des Landes Brandenburg
- Zentralarchiv der deutschen Volkserzählung [Philipps-Universität Marburg]
- Phantastische Bibliothek Wetzlar

5. What is a Nachlass/Fonds? How do you find Nachlässe?

“Fonds: the entire body of records of an organization, family, or individual that have been created and accumulated as the result of an organic process reflecting the functions of the creator.” Glossary of Archival Terms <http://www2.archivists.org/glossary>

For literary study, bio-bibliographies of authors, or the "Personalbibliographie" will often list all the location of the Nachlass and Teilnachlass, as well as the location of materials created by the person but held elsewhere; for example: the letters received by an author are part of the main Nachlass; the letters written by that same author will be held elsewhere, possibly with the Nachlass of the recipient. If a living author has donated a “Vorlass”, you may find information about this in the KLG <http://db.library.duke.edu/search?id=DUKE003976278>.

Institutions that hold Nachlässe/Fonds may offer information about a collection in several formats; for grant applications it is important to understand what information can be accessed remotely, and what information needs to be gathered locally

- Traditional printed Card Catalog in the institutional building
- A printed book (Bestandsverzeichnis) of holdings
- Digitized catalog cards available online (literally: images of the printed catalog cards)
- An online searchable catalog for the individual institution
- Findmitteldatenbanken /Finding Aid databases – in collaboration with other institutions; this allows you to search across several collections

The level of analysis and description of holdings varies: from detailed descriptions on the level of letters to rough descriptions of boxes.

6. What are Finding Aids, Findmittel, Findbücher, Findmitteldatenbanken?

In a print universe, archives presented the inventory of collections in books called Nachlassverzeichnis or Nachlassinventar. Individual collections published a printed catalog or a Bestandsverzeichnis. Some of these older detailed print records can be found in the big digital libraries for European Studies (Europeana, HathiTrust, Internet Archive, Gallica, Googlebooks).

Equally important are Union Catalogs for Finding Aids: they are the result of various collaborations amongst archives, sometimes based on region, format, time period of materials, or subject, offer a single search interface for all their collections.

Some examples of Meta search-engines: check the information pages to understand which libraries/library holdings are included in the search. Some, but by far not all institutions load these records into Worldcat.

- Bundesarchiv: Zentrale Datenbank Nachlass <http://www.nachlassdatenbank.de/>
- Bundesarchiv ARGUS <http://startext.net-build.de:8080/barch/MidosaseARCH/search.htm>
- BAM Portal zu Bibliotheken, Archiven, Museen <http://www.bam-portal.de/>
- Kalliope <http://kalliope.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/>
- Verzeichnis künstlerischer, wissenschaftlicher und kulturpolitischer Nachlässe in Österreich <http://www.onb.ac.at/sammlungen/litarchiv/19017.htm>
- HelveticArchives – the archive database of the Swiss National Library <https://www.helveticaarchives.ch/suchinfo.aspx>
- Literaturarchiv Marbach http://www.dla-marbach.de/opac_kallias
- Archivgrid <http://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/> (a web harvester, includes Worldcat data)

It is important to remember that union catalogs for historic primary materials are defined in scope by era/time period. Medieval Renaissance sources are searched in other dedicated catalogs, for example:

- [Digitized manuscript catalogs](#) (Brigitte Pfeil)
- [Online catalogues of medieval manuscripts](#) (Albrecht Diem)
- [Handschriftencensus manuscript catalogs](#)
- Malvine <http://www.malvine.org/>
- [Medieval Manuscript Catalogs & Inventories](#) (Robert D. Peckham)
- [Kristeller Online: Latin manuscript books before 1600](#)
- [Peraldus.ch: A collection of bibliographical references to medieval manuscripts](#)
- [Looking for a manuscript in the publication Scriptorium and in the Bulletin codicologique](#)
- [Hill Museum & Manuscript Library](#)

- [Schoenberg Database of Manuscripts](#)

7. What is a Sondersammlung or “Special Collection“?

1. In archives Sondersammlung or „Special Collection“ refers to a collection of (rare) primary sources, or a collection of primary & secondary materials around a theme (for example: Genderlibrary)
2. The term also refers to a distributed system of collecting in particular research areas: Webis - Sammelschwerpunkte an deutschen Bibliotheken <http://webis.sub.uni-hamburg.de/webis/index.php/Hauptseite> .
For example, a Germanistik student would do well to visit the Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main Sondersammelgebiete "Allgemeine Germanistik" und "Deutsche Sprache und Literatur" <http://www.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/>

8. German Cursive Writing /Printing Style: Schreibschriften und Druckschriften.

Before working in an archive and before committing to doing projects involving Optical Character Recognition (OCR) investigate German writing and printing styles. Consider buying a personal copy of [Note: I will order a copy for Duke Libraries]

- [Deutsche Schreibschrift: Lehrbuch: Lesen und Schreiben lernen\[Gebundene Ausgabe\] Harald Süß \(Autor\)](#)
- [Deutsche Schreibschrift, Lehrbuch \[Gebundene Ausgabe\] Harald Süß \(Autor\)](#)

Service providers focused on genealogical research often offer Internet tutorials:

- www.suetterlinschrift.de
- www.mohrhusen.de (look under downloads for nice one pagers)

9. Introductions to Archival Work.

Books held at Duke and UNC

Subject Search "[Archives -- Handbooks, manuals, etc.](#)" = results in TRLN catalog

Other:

- [«Ad fontes» - Eine Einführung in den Umgang mit Quellen im Archiv](#)
- Barteleit, Sebastian [Clio Guide to Archives](#)
- Brenner-Wilczek, Sabine et al.: Einführung in die moderne Archivarbeit, Darmstadt .2006.
- [Gebrauchsanleitung für Archive - Praktischer Leitfaden für den Einstieg in die Quellenrecherche](#)
- Glossary of Archival Terms <http://www2.archivists.org/glossary>
- [Using Archives](#) (Practical Advice from Canadian Library Association)
- [Using Manuscripts and archives: a tutorial](#) (Yale University)
- [Using Primary Sources on the Web](#)
- Check out the *Bibliographie zur Archivterminologie* at Archiv Marburg <http://archivschule.de/DE/service/bibliographien/bibliographie-zur-archivterminologie.html>