



Aad Blok, Jan Lucassen, Huub Sanders (eds.), ***A Usable Collection: Essays in Honour of Jaap Kloosterman on Collecting Social History*** (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014, 489 pp., ISBN 978 90 8964 688 0).

The editors claim that this is a volume that immediately displays a dazzling variety of subjects and that is undeniable. This weighty *Festschrift* in honour of Jaap Kloosterman – who was involved with the International Institute of Social History for almost fifty years and half of this time acting as its director – contains contributions by 34 colleagues from inside and outside the IISG, on all aspects of collecting, cataloguing, communicating and researching sources of social history, mainly collected by the institute.

Several themes can be identified among these 34 contributions; an interesting one occurring in a number of essays is that of power. Several articles are dedicated to or deal with the struggle for the physical or intellectual appropriation of documentary material among competing groups, parties and institutions, not infrequently claiming the material to be their cultural heritage or the heritage of the group they represent. In ‘The Shared History of the IAV/IIAV and ISSH’ Francisca de Haan and Annette Mevis, among other things, write about the opposing views of the women’s movement and the labour movement on material related to female emancipation. In ‘La Rosa de Foc’ Andrew Lee examines questions arising from the institutional collection of anarchist materials, including the problem of authority control on material created by groups denying authority. Margreet Schrevel in her sometimes hilarious ‘Secret Suitcases’ tells of the efforts to gather archival material from the Dutch Communist Party and its prominent members, including the efforts in 1993 of the legitimate heir to this CPN to reclaim from the keeper of the Russian records the documents dispatched by Dutch Communists to Moscow between 1919 and 1943 – a claim that was rejected of course under reference to accepted archival principles.

The volume is subdivided into four parts. The first part ‘The Emergence of Social History Collections’ deals for the most part with the early history of social history collections, as practiced by the Institute’s founder, Posthumus. Notable for its broad scope is the first essay, ‘Prolegomena to a Social History of Archives’ by Eric Ketelaar, who treats the history of the

collection of IISH as part of the social history of Dutch archives in general, in which the mutual interrelationship between social practices and record formation and archiving is a central theme.

The second part, 'The European Collections of the IISH: Acquisitions and Catalogues', is focused on what could be called the classic core of the IISH collection and its relations with European sister institutes. It includes a few essays in which single collection items are analysed, but most contributions in this part pertain to the politics and strategies around building a social history collection and to processing and cataloguing such a collection.

The third part is dedicated to 'The IISH and Eastern Europe'. Five essays together present a fascinating view of the involvement of IISH and Jaap Kloosterman, in particular in rescuing, processing and investigating collections from the former Soviet Union. Notable here is 'Bakunin and Bacon Cake' by Lex Heerma van Voss, on e-editing in social history, a most relevant essay that looks at the changes digitisation has brought to source editing, using the IISH edition of the *Oeuvres Completes* as its main example.

Finally, the fourth part, 'The IISH goes global', deals with research policy and collection development at the IISH regarding Turkey, Egypt, Sudan, China and Nepal. It also includes a more theoretical and concise essay by Stefano Belluci on 'The Role of Archives and Archivists in the Contemporary Age', in which he problematises the traditional concept of the archive in the digital world and brings attention to the concept of the Archive Service Centre, a new structure for producers of digital material, which could be created by any institution wishing to become a 'focus point' that preserves and makes available its own documentation or documentation from elsewhere.

This collection is varied indeed, which is the more obvious cause of the large number of contributions. For a *Festschrift* the coherence is not bad and the quality fairly high. All contributions, in one way or another, reflect the history of the IISH and its collections, many also reflect the history of collecting in social history in general, while some of them transcend the institutional focus by addressing more theoretical and methodological themes. Certainly this book reflects the immense worth that Jaap Kloosterman has had for the IISH and the admiration of his colleagues for his qualities, his efforts and his leadership.

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