

Librarians' Tour of Germany, May 20 – June 2, 2011

University of Wisconsin – Madison, Department of Continuing Education Services

With the generous support of Bibliothek & Information International

### Report to BI-International

The Librarians' Tour of Germany was developed by the Department of Continuing Education Services at University of Wisconsin – Madison's School of Library and Information Studies (UW-Madison SLIS). The tour offered two options for participants: one, a non-credit continuing education opportunity for librarians; and two, an option for graduate credit for students of library and information studies. Opportunities for international study are limited at UW-Madison SLIS, so several students took advantage of this opportunity.

The tour focused primarily on the history of books and print culture, and we visited several museums, special collections, rare book libraries, and archives. However, we were also able to visit a few institutions that do not focus on this subject. American librarians who took part in this tour were able to see first-hand the beautiful, rare materials in German institutions, as well as speak to the stewards of these items. Tour participants were also able to see how their overseas colleagues run and maintain German libraries.

This group was comprised of the following persons:

- **Meredith Lowe** is a Outreach Specialist for Continuing Education Services at UW-Madison – SLIS, and holds a Master's in Library and Information Studies from the same school ('08). Ms. Lowe was the tour organizer and leader.
- **Jane Pearlmutter** is the Associate Director of UW-Madison SLIS, and the Director of SLIS's Continuing Education Services department. She oversaw the graduate students' projects.
- **Helen Davis** is the circulation desk manager at the DeWitt Public Library in DeWitt, Michigan.
- **Elizabeth Davis**, while not currently working in the library field, is Helen's daughter and accompanied her mother on the trip.
- **Erin Montross-Erdmann** is a graduate student at the University of Milwaukee's School of Information Studies, and Operations Manager, Google Initiative, UW-Madison Memorial Library.
- **Jerry Erdmann** does not currently work in the library profession, but accompanied his daughter, Erin Montross-Erdmann, on the trip.
- **Mark Langenfeld** is a graduate student at UW-Madison SLIS.
- **Bridget Loera** is a graduate student at UW-Madison SLIS, and a project archives assistant with the Pasadena Museum of History.

- **Judith Louer** is an academic librarian, working in the technical services department of Memorial Library, on the UW-Madison campus.
- **Juan Martinez** is a graduate student at UW-Madison SLIS , and head of interlibrary loan at the Flagg-Rochelle (IL) Public Library..
- **Jessica Miesner** is a graduate student at UW-Madison SLIS.
- **Tomissa Porath** is a graduate student at UW-Madison SLIS.
- **Phyllis Holman Weisbard** is a librarian in the Department of Special Collections and for the Women's Studies Department for the UW-Madison Libraries.

Below is a complete itinerary of our tour in Germany:

### **Tuesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>: Mainz**

We kicked off our first full day in Germany by taking a walking tour of Mainz, which was arranged by the Mainz City Tourist office. The tour was called "From Hennes Gensfleisch to Johannes Gutenberg, the Man of the Millennium" (more information on the tour is here: <http://www.touristik-mainz.de/gruppenangebote.html?&L=1>), and included a visit to the Gutenberg Museum. At the museum, our guide demonstrated Gutenberg's printing press, and we were then free to explore the museum on our own. We saw several examples of printing mechanisms and printed materials, as well as exhibits of inventions that came from the burgeoning print-centric culture in Europe: eye-glasses and light boxes.

### **Wednesday, May 25<sup>th</sup>: Mainz**

We visited the Mainz City Archives, where municipal archivist Ramona Weisenberger gave us a brief presentation of what types of materials a municipal archive, such as Mainz's, generally holds. We were able to view a medieval charter, and we learned about the importance of the church's record-keeping for local historians and genealogists (particularly births, baptismal, and death records). Frau Weisenberger also informed us about the impact of the Napoleonic Wars, after which French systems of archiving were adopted and records were centralized. The effect of the French invasion and subsequent control over regional record-keeping systems, archives, and libraries was profound, and large portions of those systems continue to this day.

### **Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup>: Stuttgart**

In the morning, we met with students and faculty at Stuttgart's Hochschule der Medien (HdM), an academic institution which trains librarians. Professor Ingeborg Simon, the director, gave us a

presentation on the HdM's current curriculum. We were also delighted to meet three of HdM's students, each of whom gave a presentation on their practicum projects and talked about day-to-day life as library school students. The American students in the group were particularly curious about this, and we had a lively discussion about the similarities and differences between German and American training for librarians. The HdM students and faculty joined our group later in the evening for dinner as well, so we were able to have a lot of interesting and valuable conversations with them.

In the afternoon, the group toured the Württembergische Landesbibliothek (Baden-Württemberg State Library). Herr Eberhard Zwink and two of his colleagues gave a wonderful presentation of the treasures held at the Württembergische Landesbibliothek, including a Gutenberg Bible, a Freemason's White Book, illuminated manuscripts, and a book composed of collage illustrations. The group was excited to be able to see these items up close, and the library staff members were clearly happy to present to an enthusiastic audience.

### **Friday, May 27<sup>th</sup>: Stuttgart**

We went to the Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg (Baden-Württemberg State Archives), where Dr. Nicole Bickhoff led our tour. We were able to see special items held by the archives, including an extensive collection of watermarks, photographic portraits, rare maps, and illuminated manuscripts. We were also able to stop into the conservation lab, where the conservator was busy repairing books and other items that had sustained damage. We viewed books that had been damaged by fire, water, metal ink, and insects!

### **Saturday, May 28<sup>th</sup>: Day trip to Tübingen**

Our first stop in Tübingen was the library at the Deutsch-Amerikanisches Institut (d.a.i.), which is a small collection of mostly English-language materials, specifically focused on American culture and language. The d.a.i. serves as a cultural exchange agency, and puts on many programs for people interested in American culture, and for people who are interested in studying abroad in America. Frau Elke Bidell, the librarian at the d.a.i., and the student intern (from HdM in Stuttgart), Karolina, gave us a tour that included information about the programs the library offers, as well as an up-close look at the library's collections, collection development, and lending policies.

In the afternoon, we took a tour of the Tübingen University Library. The tour was led by the director, Marianne Dörr. The library is currently undergoing renovations, and we talked about the updates that the new buildings would receive.

### **Sunday, May 29<sup>th</sup>: Munich**

Because of the timing of the train arrival and the fact that this was a Sunday, the group members were given time to explore Munich's museums, shopping, and cultural offerings. Some group members chose to go to the Pinakothek, and others went to the BMW museum.

### **Monday, May 30<sup>th</sup>: Munich**

We received a guided tour through the Bavarian State Library, including a visit to the Institute of Book and Manuscript Conservation (IBR), and the Department of Manuscripts and Early Printed Books. Herr Günther Bielemeyer was our tour leader, and he explained the State Library's function as a building that serves students as well as the public. We got a close look at the library's book paging system, which involved bins of books ferried throughout the library on conveyor belts. In the IBR, we learned about the documentation required for book repair, which is complex, detailed, and extensive. We were also able to experiment with a virtual reader machine, which read hand movements to display pages of an illuminated manuscript.

### **Tuesday, May 31<sup>st</sup>: Munich**

On this day, the group departed on a day-long tour to Neuschwanstein and Linderhof castles, near Munich. Although these tours were not library-centric, the group members expressed a great deal of interest in seeing these historic landmarks. We also learned a good deal more about the history and culture of this region of Germany.

### **Wednesday, June 1<sup>st</sup>: Nuremberg**

During this day trip to Nuremberg, we took a tour of The Albrecht Dürer House and Museum, which focused on Dürer's involvement in printing and book culture. The propagation of printed materials during Dürer's lifetime had a great impact on the collective European knowledge, and on Dürer's art. We were also able to see a demonstration of how illustrations were printed in Dürer's time.

Excerpts from participants' reports on the trip:

*All in all, I would say that the places where we were taken within our tour were all very impressive and important and the free time which we had was also very helpful. We were able to really dive into the history of the places where we were staying and visiting...I also felt very privileged for*

*having the opportunity to pick the brains of all of the experienced librarians who chose to spend time with us on this librarians' tour of Germany. I feel much more personally invested in my studies as a result of this opportunity. (Jessica Miesner)*

*The whole approach to library work was different in Germany, due to the incredible depth of history there. The library in Mainz, and also the Baden-Württemberg State Library, contained many medieval manuscripts from the dissolved monasteries dating to the eighth century or earlier. ... I was awed at the many ancient treasures I was able to see. I also came away with a renewed sense of the importance and origins of Western print culture and how I believe the primacy of print can and must continue. (Mark Langenfeld)*

*Access, in addition to content creators, dissemination, and censorship were in the forefront of my mind throughout the tour. We were granted incredible access to rare materials, namely the Gutenberg Bible and an original copy of Darwin's Origin of Species. That was a definite highlight! Looking at medieval charters, World War II documents, and a Shakespeare folio really help to bring the past alive. ...In all the German Library and Archives Tour provided an awesome opportunity to explore library science at an international level, and in a country with a richly recorded history. Print culture has come a long way since the days of Gutenberg. Progressive ideas about content creation and dissemination, coupled with Internet technologies and sophisticated information systems, make the field of librarianship ever evolving. Like in the days of Gutenberg, it's an exciting time for the field. (Bridget Loera)*

*The recent trip to Germany was the point in my life where everything I enjoyed learning in a classroom came together in the context of Germany's libraries and archives... Being in the state archives in Stuttgart was the moment that everything really clicked for me, and the connections to my undergraduate and graduate education really pulled together. (Tomissa Porath)*

*The experiences I had while traveling through Germany were amazing and irreplaceable. In Stuttgart, we went to the Hochschule der Medien's Library School. The director, a member of the*

*International studies/relations department, and three of the students each spoke about their experiences with the school and about how libraries work in Germany. The presentation was very interesting, as the differences between library school, academic libraries, and public libraries here in Germany and back in the US are much greater than the differences we saw in the comparison of archives. ..Meeting up with the students for dinner was probably one of my most favorite memories of the trip. They were great company! It was fun to get to pick their brains about how libraries operate here in Germany and about how library school differs as well.... I truly felt that they welcomed us and were as interested in meeting us, as we were to meet them. I'm looking forward to maintaining a relationship with them. International cooperation and communication is key in this world that is quickly becoming very small. (Erin Montross-Erdmann).*

Note: Erin Montross-Erdmann is a member of the Staff Development Committee of UW-Madison's General Library System, and is planning a program on our experiences (with other Madison trip participants) to present to UW library staff.