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Thérèse Charmasson, Ed., *Histoire de l'enseignement, XIXe-XXe siècles : Guide du chercheur*. Seconde édition revue et augmentée. Paris: Institut national de recherche pédagogique/Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, 2006. 728 pp. Notes and index. €29.00 (pb). ISBN 2-7355-0593-6.

Review by Mona L. Siegel, California State University Sacramento.

In the autumn of 1993, I arrived at the library of the *Institut national de recherche pédagogique* (INRP) anxious to launch my dissertation research on pacifism and primary schooling between the wars. In particular, I had come to examine school textbooks from the 1920s and 1930s, but much to my surprise, when I began digging through the file catalog, there were no listings for textbooks. I might have been discouraged and moved on, but I had in my hand a slim research guide that I had purchased during an earlier trip to Paris, which stated clearly on page 194 that the INRP contained “*un très important fonds d'ouvrages scolaires.*” [1] With a deep breath, I gathered my courage and approached the nearest librarian to ask where this mysterious collection was and if I might consult it. “*Mademoiselle,*” came the rapid response, “*Il va vous falloir parler à la Directrice!*” Without delay, I was escorted into the director's office, where I pointed timidly to page 194 of the research guide, now somewhat damp from my sweaty palms, and asked ever-so-politely to consult the INRP's collection of interwar textbooks. After a few moments discussion, during which I apparently managed to convey my scholarly intentions, the Directrice called the librarian back to her office and ordered, “*Emmenez Mademoiselle à la crypte!*”

I had no idea what *la crypte* was, and it did not exactly sound welcoming, but I soon found myself escorted outside and through an unmarked door leading to the basement of the Lebanese Church located next door to the INRP on the famous rue d'Ulm. Here, it turns out, the INRP stored its indeed impressive collection of school textbooks, and I had just been granted unrestricted access to browse the shelves and consult these invaluable documents *sur place*. Amazed at my good fortune, and unsure if I would be allowed to return, or even how I would get out when the time came, I madly took notes and prayed that I would not need to run to the W.C. any time soon. As it turned out, I was able to come and go at my leisure. The textbook collection was as rich as my research guide had promised, and became a prominent source of material for my dissertation and eventually my book. [2]

In 2006 the research guide that previously proved so important to me was released in a second, super-sized edition (a hefty 728 pages, as compared to the 228-page earlier edition). Greatly expanded, clear, and comprehensive, Thérèse Charmasson's *Guide du chercheur* will undoubtedly guide the research of a new generation of historians of education, but this research guide has much to offer those whose research bears little direct connection to the study of education as well. Historians of the Revolution, colonialism, religion, science, labor, childhood, disability, and diplomacy, to name a few, will find valuable archival information. A few well-spent hours perusing its pages may shave weeks off future research trips as well as point unsuspecting scholars toward resources they would otherwise not have known existed.

The second edition of this research guide, like the first, reflects the preoccupations of the scholarly community for which it is intended. When the first edition appeared in 1986, its focus was on the history of education in the strict sense, introducing a relatively narrow community of scholars to those sources relating to the institutionalization and administration of French education over the past 200 years. The first edition thus focused on guiding readers to the most important bibliographic, archival, and statistical sources available to them. In preparing the second edition, Charmasson and her

collaborators have taken note of the effervescence of cultural history, which has led a much broader group of scholars to take interest in the content and practices of education and particularly the role of education in the construction of national and social identities (pp. 15 and 576). As a result, the new edition includes new or wholly revised chapters relating to textbooks, oral history, students' schoolwork, and pedagogical "objects and images."

The original bibliographic and archival chapters have all been updated in the new edition. Part I, *Oriental bibliographique*, provides an excellent, up-to-date introduction to some of the fundamental bibliographic, periodical, and scholarly publications on the history of education. While the emphasis is understandably on the work of French scholars, recent Anglo-American scholarship by historians such as Jo Burr Margadant, Stephen Harp, and Sarah Curtis is also noted.

Part II, *Les Archives*, walks researchers through the complex labyrinth of archives in France, with a strong focus on public archives at the national level, though departmental, municipal, and private Catholic archives are not neglected. All scholars heading into the archives for the first time would benefit from consulting the chapter, *Qu'est-ce que les archives*. Here Charmasson reviews the complex geographical, chronological, and thematic sub-divisions of the major French archives, the numbering schemes used by archivists at these various sites, and the laws regulating the release of documents. Subsequent chapters address each of these archives in turn.

For historians of education, the vast scale of potential sources can be overwhelming. At the National Archives, the F17 sub-series from the Ministry of Public Instruction alone hold nearly 30,000 numerical classifications (p. 129). At the *Archives de la défense*, scholars will find 40,000 new files, many of which deal with military education between the wars. These files had been seized first by the Germans during World War II, then by the Russians at war's end, and were finally repatriated to France in the mid-1990s (pp. 429-433). No matter what their topic, historians of education will undoubtedly depend on this guide to orient themselves amongst the wealth of archival documentation available and locate those sources most pertinent to their research.

Many specialists in other sub-fields of French history may be surprised at how valuable this research guide is for them. Although the guide focuses on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one finds reference to a variety of interesting files relating to Revolutionary history, including the debates of the Committee of Public Safety on national education (p. 118), communal-level mandates to schoolteachers during the Jacobin Republic (p. 295), and Condorcet's writings on public instruction (p. 510). Diplomatic historians might take note of the archives of the organization Mission laïque de France which oversaw the teaching of French in Alexandria, Tehran, Beirut, Jerusalem, and Damascus (p. 205). Those scholars helping to develop the field of disability history will undoubtedly be interested in documents related to teacher-training and education for the blind and deaf (pp. 257 and 646). For labor historians, an entire chapter of the guide is dedicated to the *Archives des chambres de commerce et d'industrie*, while historians of science will be equally well-served by examining the chapter on the archives of the *Académie des sciences*. Finally, both historians and literary scholars will undoubtedly enjoy examining the schoolwork of Gustave Flaubert, Marcel Proust, and Apollinaire (pp. 497-8).

The project of French colonialism was intricately intertwined with matters of education, both religious and secular, and this research guide points to many possible avenues of research. The Centre des archives d'outre-mer, for example, is the repository of the records of the 1937 *Commission d'enquête dans les territoires d'outre-mer*, created by the first Popular Front government and designed to help shape a new colonial policy for France. Many of the responses were written by schoolteachers, and indigenous education is a major topic of discussion (p. 274). The guide also points the way to educational documents relating to the former mandates of Syria and Lebanon and to textbooks and children's schoolwork from Central Africa, North Africa, and Indochina (pp. 419 and 639).

Textbooks are the subject of an entirely revised chapter in this second edition, ensuring that scholars heading to the archives today will be much better prepared to locate the sources they need than I was when I descended into *la crypte* of the INRP over a decade ago. The chapter, prepared by the premier specialist on the topic, Alain Choppin, is more than a research guide; it is an excellent overview of the cultural production of textbooks in France.[3] Equally important, Choppin provides an introduction to the database “Emmanuelle,” which is available on-line, and which will eventually provide extensive bibliographic information on all French textbooks published since 1789.[4] To date, “Emmanuelle” includes over 30,000 textbook titles from nine different disciplines (p. 582). Individual records list where the title can be located in any of the major textbook collections in France.

Children’s schoolwork is the subject of a new and welcomed chapter in this edition of the *Guide du chercheur*. Very little of children’s schoolwork — notebooks, essays, examinations, art — has made its way into archives, despite its considerable interest for a wide variety of historians. Prize-winning and sample essays and examinations were sometimes published or collected by the Minister of Public Instruction, as this chapter points out. For a more random sampling, one is left with two possible avenues of research. The first is to ferret out documents at the local level. This guide offers an extremely useful, if not entirely complete, department-by-department listing of those archives with substantial holdings of schoolwork (pp. 618-623). The second option is to take a trip to Rouen to consult the holdings of the *Musée national de l’éducation*, which has been the most systematic collector of children’s schoolwork in France (p. 623).

The *Musée national de l’éducation* (MNE) is the subject of the somewhat oddly named final chapter, “Objects and Images,” written by the museum’s director Yves Gaulupeau. While rare objects and images — such as old wooden guns used to train schoolboys in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War and a collection of old educational filmstrips — make up a part of the MNE’s diverse holdings, many important textual sources are located here as well. These include the above-mentioned textbooks and children’s schoolwork, some of which date back to the *Ancien Régime*. They also include thousands of teachers’ autobiographies, written in response to Jacques Ozouf’s survey of primary schoolteachers of the *belle époque* as well as more iconoclastic documents, like the collection of 3000 absentee notes, dating from the nineteenth century (pp. 637 and 643).[5] The museum curators construe the term education quite broadly, and historians of childhood will find here an abundance of sources relating to wet-nursing, orphans, children’s literature, and toys and games. Researchers can consult the catalog to the MNE’s collection through the on-line database Mnémosyne.[6]

The existence of on-line databases such as Emmanuelle and Mnémosyne marks one of the major changes between the publication of the first and second editions of this research guide. Whenever possible, Charmasson and her collaborators provide Internet addresses for the institutions and collections they describe. Though several of the URLs have disappeared or changed since the book’s publication (for example, p. 22, fn. 5 and p. 245, fn. 313), most seem stable and are extremely useful, particularly for foreign scholars preparing their research.

Physical locations of libraries and archives are generally more predictable than those in cyberspace, but given the dislocation caused by the government’s policy of *décentralization*, researchers would be wise to take note of the recent or planned moves of a number of archives, as noted in this guide. In 2005, the INRP’s library and textbook collection moved from its old home on the rue d’Ulm to L’Espace Denis Diderot in Lyon. Both the Centre historique of the National Archives and the research center of the MNE are scheduled to move as well (pp. 114 and 635)

From mundane street addresses to elusive archival dossiers to up-to-date digital databases, researchers will have countless reasons to thank Thérèse Charmasson and her team for producing the second edition of the *Guide du chercheur*. Indeed, the only scholars likely to be left disgruntled are those with sore backs from carrying a bulky 728-page tome with them to the archives. Be forewarned: information

on French chiropractic services is the one potentially useful piece of information NOT included in the guide!

NOTES

[1] Thérèse Charmasson, ed. *L'Histoire de l'enseignement, XIXe-XXe siècles. Guide du chercheur* [1st edition], (Paris : Institut national de recherche pédagogique, 1986), p. 194.

[2] Mona L. Siegel, *The Moral Disarmament of France: Education, Patriotism, and Pacifism, 1914-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[3] Choppin, a researcher at the *Service d'histoire de l'éducation* at the INRP, develops this theme at greater length in *Les Manuels scolaires, histoire et actualité* (Paris: Hachette Éducation, 1992).

[4] See <http://www.inrp.fr/emma/web>. A database of scholarly work on textbooks titled Emmanuelle 5 can be accessed at <http://www.inrp.fr/emma5/web>.

[5] As I discovered when I consulted this collection at the MNE, many of the teachers who responded to Ozouf's questionnaire also taught in the interwar era. See Jacques Ozouf, *Nous les maîtres d'école: autobiographies d'instituteurs de la Belle Époque* (Paris : Julliard/Gallimard, 1973); and Jacques and Mona Ozouf, with the collaboration of Véronique Aubert and Claire Steindecker, *La République des instituteurs* (Paris : Gallimard/Le Seuil, 1992).

[6] Accessible on the MNE website at <http://www.inrp.fr/musee/>.

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