Introduction

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German archives offer a rich spectrum of sources related to modern Indian history and a possibility for developing new research directions in the domain of transnational histories and historical comparison through an exploration of the history of Indo-German entanglements. These sources can also offer scholars the possibility of acquiring new research perspectives, indeed a new lens, for engaging with modern Indian history by not solely prioritizing British colonial archives. The MIDA-Archival Guide, which accompanies the project's online database, is an open-access forum for reflexive discussions on the rich India-related holdings of German archives. One of the main objectives of the Archival Guide is to reflect on how the turn towards entangled transnational and global histories not only raises new theoretical questions, but also confronts us with methodological issues on the relationship between entangled histories and archives. At the same time, it is a site for acquiring comprehensive overviews of India-related archival holdings of German archives for specific themes.

Since September 2018, the DFG funded long-term project "Modern India in German Archives, 1706-1989" ("Das Moderne Indien in deutschen Archiven", MIDA) has successfully launched an open-access database (with an extensive catalogue and index) that enlists, indexes and describes holdings related to modern Indian history and the history of Indo-German entanglements, which are housed in German archives. The time period in focus is from the establishment of the Danish-Halle Mission in South India (1706) up to the end of the political division of Germany (1989/90). The database is a platform made available on a long-term basis to the international community of historians of South Asia as a "growing" and open digital resource.

The Archival Guide gives users a thematic and problematized overview into the holdings. The objective is to open a space of discussion on the holdings that does not limit the history of Indo-German entanglements to a binary logic and to critically reflect on the ordering architecture of the archives.

Objectives of the MIDA Archival Guide: New Avenues and Older Frameworks

Conventional archival guides are often a handy tool kit that enables users to conduct fruitful searches related to archives, their catalogues and databases, their ordering principles and any other finding aids that may be useful for historical research. Some guides have attempted to familiarize students with archival vocabulary and historical methods (for example the *Berliner Archiv Guide*[1] or the archival guide of the Society of American Archivists titled *Using Archives: A Guide to Effective Research*)[2] in order to reduce the sense of awe and intimidation induced by the institution. There are others, however, which are more specific and offer details of relevant reference books, reports of visitors, background information, notes, discussions and correspondences on what one should know before entering the physical brick and mortar space called the archive (for example the instructive *Guides to Russian Archives* made available by the University of Warwick).[3] Certain archives also offer highly systematized archival guides which provide users information on the holdings and their structure, interactive links to catalogues and guides, research themes with bibliographies and a selection of primary sources as well as useful databases and online

sources (for example the elaborate *League of Nations Archive Resource Guide*).[4] While some online portals simply offer a list of several archives with basic information and sometimes a brief description of the holdings (see *Hamburg Wissen Digital*)[5], some archives offer possibilities to see an extensive list of archival guides which are thematically organized and direct readers to enlisted holdings (as in the case of The National Archives, the United Kingdom, Scotland and Wales).[6] At the same time, certain forums have attempted to give comprehensive overviews on archival ordering and the German archival landscape (*see Clio Online*).[7] In short, the landscape of archival guides is an eclectic one where the kind of information that users can access varies from the general to the particular. It may be summed up more generally that archival guides are a pragmatic know-how apparatus, which offers a wide spectrum of information ranging from reading room hours to the rules of the archive and from catalogues to instructive indexes.

The MIDA Archival Guide, while being similar to the available plethora of archival guides, differs in two concrete ways –

I. An excursion into the German archival landscapes on modern Indian history
Firstly, it is a platform for providing users an extensive overview on India related holdings in German archives on very *specific research topics* (for example if researching on the Mysore wars, users can have a detailed insight into the landscape of holdings that offer sources on the wars from the perspective of the Hannoverian regiment that participated in the wars from Germany).[8] The objective here is to offer users an exhaustive sketch of the archival landscape in Germany on a topic. Where should one look when working on a particular subject of interest? Which holdings are relevant and what can they offer? How can these holdings offer new perspectives for writing 'other' and 'newer' histories, which have been extensively written about by relying on other sources (for example British colonial sources in the case of the Mysore Wars)? The MIDA Archival Guide will offer a series of posts which will engage with these issues. In doing so, the posts open avenues for newer research by referring to newly discovered sources. They therein aim to evoke the interest of users into lesser-explored research areas through the lens of sources in German holdings. At the same time, while opening new sites of research, the posts provide readers with an overarching synopsis on the 'where', 'how-to' and possible 'what' of the theme– a helpful outline for how to commence when conducting research on a particular topic.

Whereas some posts intend to re-open themes which have previously been extensively researched (albeit mainly within colonial archives) through the prism of holdings housed in German archives (as mentioned, the Mysore wars is an illustrative example of the same), others aim at evoking interest in topics which have been generally less explored. These hitherto relatively underexplored themes can be instructive in two ways–

(i) They can open *new research avenues* in the history of Indo-German entanglements (for example, see the post on the GDR diplomat Herbert Fischer in India or the posts on forestry and botany as a site of Indo-German entanglements) and;

(ii) They can draw our attention to *smaller archives and private collections* housed in German archives, which may offer new insights into these entangled histories as well as their accompanying entangled archives (for example, see the post on the Horst Krüger collection

housed in the archive of the Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin or the post on the Petra and Joachim Heidrich collections in the same archive).

II. Archival Guide as a site for critical engagement with sources

Another objective of the Archival Guide is to reflect on larger theoretical and methodological considerations which arise when engaging in the seemingly banal job of cataloguing, describing, ordering and indexing. Whereas the guide does aim to show users *what* is to be found in the rich holdings of German archives when researching on themes in modern Indian history, we also intend to do so transparently by sharing the *how* of our own process of cataloguing and collecting information on such sources.

The Digital Turn has enabled the extraction of information from archives and their re-ordering in newer digital architectures. Easy access to this newly ordered information can be highly beneficial in that it can enable access to a world of newly discovered and unexplored sources, sometimes even without the researcher having to physically visit an archive. It can, however, also de-contextualise information and isolate it from where it is physically housed. Full-text searches often lead to very exact information that usually belongs to a larger archival environment. The relatedness of any two holdings that have sources on modern Indian history may sometimes not be visible in these full-text searches. Such contextual information, which can often be crucial for historians, especially when writing transnational histories of entanglements, can be lost in the precise specificity of search results. The MIDA Archival Guide is thus different from conventional archival guides in that it brings such issues to the forefront of discussion through its essays.

Given that the database offers users the possibility to do full-text searches and that it also incorporates a vast corpus of keyword indexes (made for each archive enlisted in the database), the Guide does not intend to repeat these extensive lists of keywords in the form of an open access thesaurus made available in the guide. A thematic organization of the posts, however, enables users to get overviews of holdings on particular themes. A larger overarching aim is *critically reflect on the results that are to be seen in the database*. These discussions become all the more necessary in order to avoid the trap of re-enforcing the writing of histories, which may conform to the institutional and territorialising logic of existing archives. The Guide will address these aspects in two ways outlined below.

(i) Methodologically this entails a discussion on how the database 'digitally' transforms the architecture of archival holdings listed in it. The Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology, published by the Society of American Archivists distinguishes between two ordering principles: provenance (Provinienz-Prinzip) and pertinence (Pertinenz-Prinzip). The principle of provenance is defined as "1. The origin or source of something. – 2. Information regarding the origins, custody, and ownership of an item or collection"[9]. Alternatively, "[p]rovenance is a fundamental principle of archives, referring to the individual, family, or organization that created or received the items in a collection. The principle of provenance or the *respect des fonds* dictates that records of different origins (provenance) be kept separate to preserve their context"[10]. In contrast to this, the other ordering principle in archival terminology is the principle of pertinence. This is defined as: "A principle of arranging records based on content, without regard for their provenance or original order".[11] Holdings related to India are housed in German archives in accordance with the principle of provenance. The MIDA database transforms these categorizations according to the principle

of pertinence by extracting such sources and ordering them thematically, with India as the focus.[12]

One of the objectives of the process of producing the database has been to simultaneously mirror the architecture of the archive concerned and nonetheless showcase the India-specific sources in a new systematized order. How can this be done effectively so that the database allows users to view the sources *as they exist* in the context in which they are embedded in the archival structure while simultaneously inserting them in a new systematic? The Archival Guide opens a discussion on these questions to underline the methodological implications of cataloguing India-related holdings in a new database.

(ii) Thematically, the Archival Guide is an ever-expanding site for discussions on new research topics. Whereas numerous posts highlight and reflect upon the results already readily viewable in the database (for example the post on Herbert Fischer, many of whose sources are housed in the holdings of the Bundesarchiv listed in the database), newer thematic avenues open parallel to the development of the project. Some of the themes, which might not be adequately represented in the holdings listed in the database, can nevertheless be covered by posts written for the Archival Guide by experts on such specific research topics. This is a strategy necessitated by the awareness that, owing to limited manpower, not all India related holdings in all German archives can be enlisted in a period of twelve years within the database. The Archival Guide will thus be an open platform which will invite external scholars for contributions on their area of expertise. This will therein make it possible to have posts which give overviews of German archival holdings on themes not covered by the database and, simultaneously, mark the beginning of exchange with a larger community of historians of South Asia.

(iii) Theoretically our concerns relate to how a project like MIDA can create a new structure of metadata that cuts across the institutional and territorial logic of existing archives and, at the same time, avoids, replacing this logic with an equally narrow and territory-bound bilateral 'Indo-German' logic? Which formats of finding aids are required for creating transnational research facilities in the context of such a project so as to overcome the false separation of the 'technical' and the 'scientific'? The Archival Guide aims to address these questions through a range of critically engaging posts. Besides, theoretical discussions on entangled archives and entangled histories, Digital Humanities or entangled institutional and oral archives will engage with debates within existing literature and the possibility for new theoretical directions in modern Indian history and the history of Indo-German entanglements.

The MIDA Archival Guide is thus a *Reflexicon*- a reflexive lexicon- of how to navigate through India related holdings in German archives, acquire an overview of the same for specific topics, and of how to critically engage with larger theoretical and methodological debates that emerge from the exercise of tracing, extracting, listing, ordering and indexing information.

We hope you enjoy the navigational experience!

[1] *Berliner Archiv Guide*, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin in co-operation with Facts and Files, Berlin, https://www.iaaw.hu-berlin.de/de/region/suedasien/publikationen/archiv/berlinerarchivguide_hub_2010.pdf, last accessed November 26, 2017.

[2] L. Schmidt, Using Archives: A Guide to Effective Research, Society of American Archivists, 2011, pp. 1-16, http://files.archivists.org/pubs/UsingArchives/Using-Archives-Guide.pdf, accessed September 4, 2018.

[3] M.J. Berry and M.J. Ilic, *Using the Russian Archives: an Informal Practical guide for Beginners Based on Users' Experience*, British Academic Committee for Collaboration With Russian Archives, in association with the Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Birmingham. First published July 1999. Revised for electronic publication December 2002, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/economics/staff/mharrison/archive/guides/, accessed September 5, 2018.

[4] The League of Nations Archives Resource Guide, http://libraryresources.unog.ch/c.php?g=462663, accessed September 7, 2018.

[5] *Hamburg, Wissen Digital*, http://www.hamburgwissen-digital.de/weitere-angebote/archivfuehrer.html, accessed September 7, 2018.

[6] *The National Archives, UK*, http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/, accessed September 7, 2018.

[7] F. M. Bischoff, *Archive*, 2016, https://guides.clio-online.de/guides/sammlungen/archive/2016, accessed September 8, 2018.

[8] See post by M. C. Füchsle, „Quellen zu den Mysore-Kriegen (1766-1799) aus deutschen Archiven", MIDA Archivführer.

[9] *The Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology,* Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, 2005, p. 317.

[10] *The Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology,* Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, 2005, p. 317.

[11] *The Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology,* Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, 2005, p. 292.

[12] For more reflections on the process of re-structuring through databases, also see, Bajpai, A., Heymann, J. and Suski, T., "Tracing India in German Archives: Entangled Pasts in the age of Digital Humanities", in: *South Asia Chronicle*, 6, pp. 289-314.