Preface

The journal of the Department of ALM has a lot of ground to cover. Even if we would consider archives, libraries and museums all to be ‘memory institutions,’ relatively independent academic disciplines research these organisations. What the articles in the current issue of Tidskrift för ABM show, however, is how the three fields represented at the Department of ALM all meet each other at a crossroad between longstanding tradition and innovation fostered through critique and societal changes. That is a great place to be for any academic discipline.

The four research articles represent some of the many angles Information Studies takes and how the field brings together different methods and disciplines. We start with an article firmly grounded in the disciplinary traditions of Archival Studies. In his article on provenance principles in Swedish municipality archives, Reine Rydén showcases how research might go a different way than initially expected. Rydén explains how an attempt to study the implementation of preservation regulations of municipal files ends in analysing the municipalities’ application of provenance principles, as well as the influence of reorganisation on such practices. Rydén does so by combining his strong empirical material with a historical account of provenance principles. By staying close to archival practice in complex institutions like municipalities, he is able to make concrete recommendations for improvement.

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The further three articles are reworks of master’s theses from three different disciplines. Alma Aspeborg, graduate of Uppsala University’s master’s program in Ethnology, writes about museum practices. Her study not only speaks to those working within the realm of Museum and Heritage studies; it also reifies the connection between the practices and methods of ethnology and Uppsala University’s Department of ALM. Aspeborg studies the presentation of dead bodies in museum spaces, using ethnographic methods. She analyses how visitors experience museums’ cues for signalling their ‘museumness’. Through these techniques, Aspeborg argues, museums perform a genre. By experiencing this genre, visitors respond in a particular way to the presence of deceased people in an exhibition.

Reaching across disciplines Klara Müller, a graduate of History of Science and Ideas at Uppsala University, approaches an Information Studies topic from a historian’s point of view. In her study, she problematizes the introduction of computers and technology in healthcare by analysing how, and which, medical knowledge was translated into binary code. In this way, Müller stands on the earlier described crossroads and critically examines technologically fueled innovations in knowledge management.

The fourth article is the first ever that the journal publishes from a graduate of our recently inaugurated Digital Humanities master’s program. Nadim Herbert brings together critical theory with digital humanities by analysing a social media marketing campaign by Nike. He carefully discusses their collaboration with Colin Kaepernick to show how a brand like Nike ‘woke-washes’ their image by aligning themselves with progressive values.

As the journal’s editor, I am also very excited to include contributions from outside Uppsala University in this issue. Our colleagues in Borås contribute with a review of the scholarly journal and resource Programming Historian. Björn Ekström, Elisa Tattersall Wallin, and Hana Marčetić outline the main benefits and drawbacks of the online resource. Pointing out the use for scholars, teachers, and students, including this review in Tidskrift för ABM further mimics the Department’s commitment to Digital Humanities.

Another ‘first’ for the journal is the inclusion of the book review genre. Student and staff member Joel Gordon Hultsjö read Permanent Record by Edward Snowden. Hultsjö not only summarizes the text and outlines the main narratives, he places them within the perspective of Archive and
Information Studies. The critical reflections Hultsjö includes make for an informative book review that shows how academic inspiration can very much come from popular culture and politics.

Finally, even though it almost seems impossible in 2020, the issue includes a travelogue. With support of the Department of ALM, Caroline Wänlund travelled to England and visited libraries at the beginning of the year. We hope that account of this trip helps our readers to remember those research-related travels we all know and miss.

The issue in front of you is created by an active editorial board. We are very happy to have worked together with three excellent student editors this year, and thank them for their hard work: Thomas Dawson, Katarina Charalampopoulou, and Emma Andersson. Thanks go as well to the journal’s more experienced board members, Ulrika Kjellmann and Isto Huvila. We are grateful that Zanna Friberg contributed as an editor this year as well. Rest me to thank Amalia Juneström who has put so much effort and time in editing the journal, this and previous years. She finishes her work with Tidskrift för ABM as secretary for this issue. It is an issue to be proud of. One where Tidskrift för ABM does what it was founded for – publishing students’ work – and more. As the thickest, or heaviest, issue yet, we present you with 98 pages including a diversity of research coming from within our department, across the University, as well as our Swedish research community. Enjoy!

Inge Zwart
Uppsala, December 2020

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