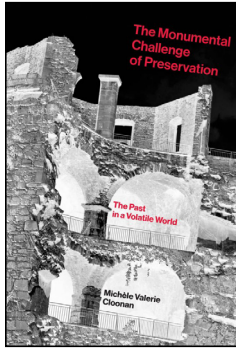# Book Reviews

Michèle Valerie Cloonan. *The Monumental Challenge of Preservation: The Past in a Volatile World*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018. 280p. Hardcover, $30.00 (ISBN: 978-0-262-03773-0).

In her book *The Monumental Challenge of Preservation*, author Michèle Valerie Cloonan addresses a wide array of issues, as diverse as they are immense. It's not just library and information preservation engaging this professor and Dean Emerita of the Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences at Simmons College. Rather, as her subtitle, *The Past in a Volatile World*, suggests, her scope is broader, and her focus is the preservation of world culture itself, in all its manifestations.

After noting that "we are what we preserve—and don't preserve," Cloonan guides us to flashpoints, crises, and critical events and contexts endangering the survival of cultural products across civilizations and time. There is a chapter discussing the removal of Stalinist monuments and protests against allowing the Book of Kells to leave Ireland for exhibits. A history of the term "genocide" and the evolution of the meaning of "cultural genocide" follows. A discussion of the horrific and ongoing war in Syria comes next, focusing on human suffering and the deliberate destruction of cultural icons and heritage at the hands of religious zealots. Cloonan then widens her viewpoint with a theoretical look at the urge to collect as a variant of the preservation mandate; next, she zeroes in on a case of an obsessive collector/photographer who lost his life trying to halt the destruction of architectural landmarks. In the section on "information or objects," OCR issues, Google Books, the saving of vintage video games, and the ephemeral nature of digitization itself are discussed, while the next section, "The Greening of Preservation," attempts to link preservation of the natural and the built environment with that of traditional records and cultural artifacts. As the book approaches its end, the essays/chapters become more philosophical, meditating on the conundrum of materials deemed offensive to some. Should they be preserved at all? What are the consequences if they are or are not? The epilogue considers Berlin as the objectification of many of the issues discussed; she calls it a "City of Reconciliation and Preservation." The fact that is done in 276 pages, with many black and white photos, bibliography, and footnotes is astonishing, and "monumental"—a word so often used that it loses meaning, reduced to a pun.

The book is well researched; and individual chapters succinctly sum up situations and topics that could (and do) comprise whole volumes. As such, it serves as a good introduction to any number of diverse geopolitical, cultural, conservation and preservation issues, never doing full justice to a single one. Yet some vignettes and personalities are so well done that they manage to be both suggestive and satisfying. Cloonan is to be praised for her grand attempt, often succeeding in detailed analysis. The chapters hint at, but never arrive at, solutions, which, to be fair, is not one of the book's stated intentions. Yet readers following her arguments, convinced by her combination of passion and cool analysis, may nevertheless feel frustrated by the oft-repeated phrase that solutions will be difficult. The book troubles the mind, no doubt as the author intended, but this reviewer found that lack of follow-through as to what we as

professionals and citizens of a global village can do, troubling, too.—*Harlan Greene, College of Charleston*

Jennifer S. Ferguson. *Using Authentic Assessment in Information Literacy Programs: Tools, Techniques, and Strategies*. Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 2018. 157p. Paper, $45.00 (ISBN 978-1-5381-0481-1).
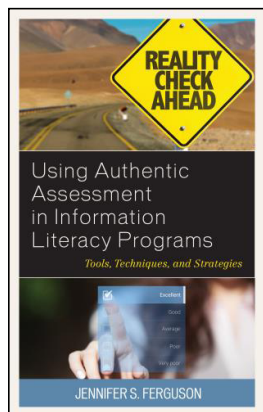
In the field of education, few topics have had the enduring interest of practitioners and researchers alike as assessment. Understanding what students are learning, how they learn, and, more centrally to the concept of authentic assessment, what they are able to do is critical to being an effective educator. An additional layer of complexity exists within academic libraries, as librarians investigate whether a connection (or more than one) exists between librarian-led, library-centric instruction and student outcomes. Within this multilayered conversation is Jennifer Ferguson's examination of incorporating authentic assessment as part of information literacy. The eight chapters of this relatively slim volume divide the topic of authentic assessment, broadly speaking, into the past, present, and future. The first chapter, "Authentic Assessment Defined," begins provocatively by asking a series of rhetorical questions regarding the current state of library assessment and challenging the profession with the observation that much of what passes for assessment within libraries "tells us very little about the actual learning that takes place in information literacy instruction." However, beyond that, until near the end of the book, there is little direct challenge to the status quo. Instead, the bulk of what follows suggests that instructional librarians adopt existing, authentic assessment methods to gain a better understanding of the impact of their instructional efforts.

After the initial portion, the first chapter goes on to provide a brief overview of the topic both from the broader educational perspective as well as within librarianship. Some historical perspective is provided, as well as more recent developments, all in an effort to arrive at a working definition of authentic assessment. Given both the wealth of available literature on the topic and the evolutionary history of assessment, the six pages given to this part of the conversation is not much more than a cursory glance. However, the references included at the end of this and all the other chapters include a number of highly cited works (as well as others that are not highly cited), thereby enabling readers who wish to explore this part of the subject more deeply to do so. Chapter 2, "Authentic Assessment in Academic Libraries," offers further development on the current state of authentic assessment within various forms of library instruction (in other words, credit-bearing courses, embedded librarians, librarian-departmental faculty collaborations, information literacy programs, one-shot sessions, online instruction, and "other settings"). The discussion for each of these instructional settings is approximately a page in length, and the relevance of this chapter will vary with each reader. After all, not every librarian has experience with this variety; indeed, as the author observes, most librarians are limited to one-shot sessions. This limitation, and the challenges of authentically assessing student learning during one-shot sessions, is reflected in that discussion, which is nearly twice the length of most of the other instructional methods included for discussion.