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Sir Arthur G. Doughty: Bibliography

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REVIEWS

Margaret J. Dixon and Ian E. Wilson, eds., *Sir Arthur G. Doughty: Bibliography*, February 2023, www.ianewilson.ca/doughty/bibliography.

Review by BRENDAN F. R. EDWARDS
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Poet, journalist, and writer Arthur G. Doughty (1860–1936) was the first Dominion Archivist of Canada; he has also been a long-time subject of interest to Ian E. Wilson, former chief Librarian and Archivist at Library and Archives Canada (LAC). Wilson and his collaborator Margaret J. Dixon (retired Senior Project Archivist, LAC) have compiled an online bibliography of Doughty's works. Their bibliography is a precursor to Wilson's forthcoming full-length Doughty biography, offering insights into Doughty's life story, career, and vision.

Doughty envisioned the Public Archives of Canada—the precursor to today's LAC—as critical in developing a historical awareness among Canadians, albeit an understanding of the past that favoured Anglo-Saxon and French settler perspectives. In support of this vision, he collected a wide array of documentation at home and abroad, published archival documents, and significantly contributed to Canadian historiography. In doing so, he built his reputation and fulfilled a promise to Sir Wilfrid Laurier to “make the Archives an important factor in the development of our national life” (n.p.). Dixon and Wilson assert that Doughty's numerous and varied publications are an essential aspect of his biography, which describes his notable career as an archivist.

Initially motivated by a desire to enhance his own reputation as he established himself, and with vice-regal encouragement, Doughty shifted his mission as an archivist to enhance Canadians' knowledge of their past

based on original documentary sources. In doing so, he built up the foundation for the study of Canadian history in the twentieth century and beyond. Doughty's perspective reflected English and French settler-colonial understandings of Canada and Canadian citizenship. Therefore, his circumscribed conception of Canada's history reflected and reinforced the political and social power structures of the day, ultimately buttressing the tone for the kind of history reflected within the Public Archives of Canada and Canadian historiographical perspectives for decades to come. The controversy over the precise location of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham first alerted Doughty to the neglected state of Canada's documentary heritage; this motivated him to develop a documentary footing for Canadian historiography. Official government records, private manuscripts of colonial administrators, transcripts of key documents in British, French, and Canadian archives, historical artifacts, and works of art formed part of the collection he amassed.

At the same time, Doughty wrote and published prolifically as a poet and journalist. The format of many of Doughty's books and publications embodied a commitment to fine craftsmanship; special bindings with high-quality leather, marbled endpapers, watermarked paper, selected typefaces, and illustrations are characteristic of his major books. This was notable for the time, as the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were markedly a period of mass market production and circulation of books. Dixon and Wilson point out that presentation copies and limited editions of several of Doughty's works represent some of the finest achievements in book arts in Canada and the United Kingdom at the time. Dixon and Wilson's methodology in compiling this bibliography consisted of reviewing collections of Doughty's publications at LAC, Wilson's personal collection of books by or about Doughty acquired over several decades from antiquarian booksellers, and other sources held by Queen's University. These efforts were supplemented by searches of library catalogues, online newspaper resources, journals, archival records and finding aids, and digitized versions of Doughty's publications. In each instance, Dixon and Wilson verified bibliographical information by

examining physical copies or digital copies in the case of particularly fragile or scarce works.

This bibliography identifies more than ninety published and unpublished works written in whole or in part by Doughty. Organized chronologically by the date each work was published, it adheres to standards outlined in *A Bibliography of Canadiana, Second Supplement* (1985–1989) and *Upper Canadian Imprints* (1988), providing additional notes for variants and special editions. Rather than providing lengthy descriptive detail, Dixon and Wilson have taken full advantage of the online format and opted to use photographs to present the richness of Doughty's dedication to book design and presentation. This approach makes for a more visually attractive bibliography than we are typically accustomed to, and the photographs are indispensable to the bibliographical descriptions. Access to the bibliographical entries is also provided through a title index and poetry index. In anticipation of a full biographical study of Doughty, Wilson's detailed chronology of key events in Doughty's life provides context for his publications. As online trends and design change rapidly, however, it remains to be seen how long the web format of this resource will remain effective. Wilson's forthcoming full-length work on Doughty, presumably in monograph form, will have an opportunity to build on this initial effort and reinforce its long-term utility.

Altogether, this online resource is attractively and intuitively presented, and it constitutes a successful bio-bibliography of a foundational figure in the evolution of Canadian historiography. Generations of historians and students have benefited from Doughty's vision and efforts as Canada's pioneering archivist. In short, this bio-bibliography is an important resource for anyone interested in the history of History and the history of the book in Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Doughty's influential role in the development of archives and the acquisition of a wealth of primary historical documents will continue to avail Canadian historians for generations to come, and Dixon and Wilson's efforts at shedding light on his influence are commendable.

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