according to Bell, have thought of themselves as records creators since the advent of graphical user interfaces. Once people could create documents and place them in folders on their computers, they began to see their work as almost archival. This, in part, has led to a new understanding and definition of records. Bell explores the issues, both positive and negative, with this new way of thinking and addresses how archivists and records managers must deal with digital objects and their organization. To face the challenges that technology presents, archivists and records managers need to face these issues head-on and take steps to bring the creators, keepers, and users of records closer together. In both theory and practice, Bell concludes, recordkeeping should not be static.

Archives and Recordkeeping: Theory into Practice is described on its back cover as "essential reading for students and educators" in the field. I could not agree with this more. If you are a professor of archives or recordkeeping courses, put this book on your syllabus. If you are a student preparing to enter the profession, pick this book up. In addition, those of us who are already working in the archival profession should look at the essays in this text to expand our own understanding of the historical and theoretical contexts of the world in which we work. In particular, current professionals should closely read Jennifer Meehan's chapter on arrangement and description and Rachel Hardiman's fabulous discussion of philosophy in chapter 6. These two chapters are the cream of a very good crop.

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NOTES

1 Richard Pearce-Moses, *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005), http://www2.archivists.org/glossary.

Extensible Processing for Archives and Special Collections: Reducing Processing Backlogs

By Daniel A. Santamaria. Chicago: American Library Association, 2015. 235 pp. Softcover. $75.00. ISBN 978-0-8389-1257-7.

A book called *Extensible Processing for Archives and Special Collections: Reducing Processing Backlogs* might not seem like it is going to be an emotional experience. Among other things, there are chapters devoted to reimagining processing workflows, obliterating backlogs, and making digitization part of the

routine (not a bonus at the end). The book addresses topics such as metrics and MPLP, accessioning and project planning, worker supervision and collections surveys. Every case study, example, and chart is illustrative and straightforwardly helpful. It might sound dry, I know. And yet, for all of its deeply logical arguments and eminently accessible ideas about instituting procedural changes, Dan Santamaria's text is also firmly rooted in a kind of archival idealism that could reinvigorate many of us in the field who feel hampered by traditional methods and intimidated by resistant attitudes. There's a sense of hope. And that matters.

Right off the bat, we are treated to sobering statistics about the high percentage of collections buried in institutional backlogs. The citation that "internet-accessible finding aids currently exist for only 44 percent of archival collections" (p. 2) is shocking, to say the least. Santamaria wastes no time invoking Mark Greene and Dennis Meissner's provocative article "More Product, Less Process,"[1] carefully detailing Greene and Meissner's strategies for policies and metrics, description, arrangement, and preservation. MPLP strategies continue to polarize many in the archival community, who see a "minimal" approach as lazy or unprofessional. This book's nonhidden agenda is to gently debunk that point of view, instead framing MPLP as a tool to build iterative systems of processing that empower archivists and make more collections available to users. Indeed, Santamaria's overview of how processing gets impeded and backlogs accrue shows how everyone loses when our traditional procedures are precious instead of productive.

Before going further, the six stated principles of extensible processing are worth quoting in full:

1. Create a baseline level of access for all collections material.
2. Create a standardized, structured description.
3. Manage archival materials in the aggregate.
4. Do no harm; limit physical handling and processing.
5. Iterate by conducting further processing in a systematic but flexible way.
6. Approach processing holistically. (p. 16)

The book cites these six steps again and again, contextualized to whatever the chapter's primary topic may be. Chapters 3 through 5 tackle the importance of collections assessment and accessioning, while proposing a reinvention of the standard archival processing workflow. Chapter 6 reminds us that archivists don't necessarily have to reinvent the wheel when it comes to description because DACS (Describing Archives: A Content Standard) is a sturdy structure that provides guidance along with flexibility when needed. Chapter 7 deals with integrating digitization into the processing structure (yes! finally!). Chapter 8 talks about how to supervise processing projects, set deadlines, and develop forward-thinking policy. I could go on at length about the wisdom and

step-by-step guidance contained in these pages. Santamaria's tone is light and forthright, didactic but never belabored. The six steps above are drawn out in each chapter and supported with current examples of successful work being done in the field. Despite the seeming simplicity of the list, implementing this sort of program could disrupt many organizations, as it requires a concerted commitment to restructuring procedures and reallocating skills, along with a significant amount of trust that investments of time and energy will ultimately prove beneficial.

It's helpful to realize, then, that Santamaria surely devised and deployed many of the techniques he writes about in this book while working to eliminate the backlog at Princeton's Mudd Manuscript Library, where he worked from 2004 to 2014 before leaving to take a position as director of digital collections and archives at Tufts University. The Princeton project—which succeeded in "making 3,220 linear feet of new material available since 2007" (p. 176)—is a constant referent throughout the text and for good reason: the tools and procedures that were developed worked really well. This book functions as a way to share those lessons learned, while gently urging archivists to embrace work models that foster transparency, access, and equanimity. Other publications, like Kathleen Roe's estimable *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts*, discuss processing techniques at length and provide sound guidance. This book has immediacy and heart, though, that grounds all of Santamaria's technical talk in an awareness that the archival profession can *do more*.

Collections should be used. A gatekeeper mentality serves no other purpose than to create artificial barriers to the world's cultural history for the sake of "preservation." Extensible processing means making information about every collection available to users as soon as possible. It means accounting for all collections, then devoting more detailed attention as needed. Santamaria acknowledges that constructing a cyclical, responsive, and extensible processing program takes hard work on all fronts, but he also clearly delineates the current and long-term value of reconceptualizing workflows to maximize access. By making collections visible, even at a very baseline level, a domino effect of positivity occurs. And it is nice that the first half of the book is a breakdown of how exactly to enact this effect, while the included eight case studies and file examples show this type of work in action. Readers can focus on getting the premise and mechanics solidly in hand, then examine how people implemented them successfully. It should also be noted that any of these chapters or case studies could easily stand on their own as brief, instructive missives tailored to processors or collections archivists, upper-level management, or those individuals tasked with a full spectrum of responsibilities. Engaging with the whole book has a cumulative effect though, and, in the spirit of "approaching processing holistically," I would heartily recommend reading the entire text.

Chapter 9 addresses many questions that might linger for those less enthusiastic about revising traditional procedures. Santamaria methodically addresses the ways in which extensible processing allows for quicker access to new materials, eliminates and prevents backlog, helps cultivate active and rewarding relationships with donors, and builds a culture of making access more effectively user driven. He also writes compellingly about archivists who feel their professional status might be diminished by "limiting detailed processing techniques" (p. 138), pointing out that increased efficiency will actually allow us to utilize our skills more robustly in other ways. As Santamaria eloquently puts it:

> If archivists are not refoldering, weeding, arranging, or describing the same way every time, what is left to do? Making difficult decisions and looking at the big picture. . . . Looking at complex collections and recognizing the patterns and relationships between and within them. . . . Solving problems and being creative in finding ways to provide access to collections. All of these are incredibly valuable, and highly valued, skills for archivists who will lead the way in delivering archival material to users. (pp. 139–40)

Embracing MPLP doesn't mean abandoning our training as archivists. Extensible processing doesn't devalue the work that we do. The goal of both these concepts—and the result of implementing the types of workflows that Santamaria describes—is refocusing our collective energy on increasing accessibility in every way possible, even if that means seeing our own professional purpose through a slightly different lens. This book calmly and insistently sets forth ideas that can help archivists gain more intellectual and physical control over their collections, increase their focus on user experience, and generate more institutional support for the work being done. It's a useful text for managers, lone arrangers lost in the weeds, young professionals (like me) who are struggling to marry theory and practice, and anyone working in archives who believes that our ultimate goal is to get everything out of the stacks and into embodied communities of research and curiosity.

In his article, "Archives for All: Professional Responsibility and Social Justice," Rand Jimerson noted that "In the 'information age,' knowledge is power. This power gives those who determine what records will be preserved for future generations a significant degree of influence. Archivists must embrace this power, rather than continuing to deny its existence."[2] This sentiment is very much alive in Santamaria's book, and it feels important to witness a respected and thoughtful professional sharing tools with his peers, instead of prescriptively reinforcing old patterns or simply complaining about frustrating circumstances. What we talk about when we talk about processing is too often bogged down by perfectionism, comfort, and a fear of being overwhelmed with change. Let's start talking about how to *do more*, about how to be better archivists for

ourselves and for the communities we serve. This book is a good place to start the conversation.

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Notes

1 Mark Greene and Dennis Meissner, "More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing," *The American Archivist* 68 (Fall/Winter 2005): 208–63.

2 Randall C. Jimerson, "Archives for All: Professional Responsibility and Social Justice," *The American Archivist* 70 (Fall/Winter 2007): 254.

Using Functional Analysis in Archival Appraisal: A Practical and Effective Alternative to Traditional Appraisal Methodologies

By Marcus C. Robyns. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014. 191 pp. Softcover. $55.00. ISBN 978-0-8108-8797-8.

I found the value of this book to be more that of a case study than a work of theory. The author supplies enough biographical information in the preface to reveal the process by which he developed the appraisal system he argues for through his prior career and then his work as archivist of the Central Upper Peninsula and Northern Michigan University Archives. Readers of *The American Archivist* will remember that he and Jason Woolman described this process in a 2011 article that outlines both the use of functional analysis as an appraisal method in a small archives and a suggestion of its use for arrangement as well. Some of the process information and forms used are also available on the NMU Archives website under Records Management.[1]

The book is arranged in two parts—a theoretical background section followed by a section on the implementation of the method—plus a set of appendixes providing forms and outlines to support the second part. The theoretical section presents an oversimplified version of what has become at least one canonical view. The work of Muller, Feith, and Fruin and that of Hilary Jenkinson are presented as "custodial" (and a Bad Thing), while Schellenberg is portrayed as a transitional figure who moved archivy into the "postcustodial" age (seen as a Good Thing; although to call Schellenberg postcustodial in actual practice is a serious misunderstanding of what the word means to archivists).[2] The "Postcustodial" view is said to be underpinned by philosophers Jacques Derrida[3]