Extensible Processing for Archives and Special Collections: Reducing Processing Backlogs. By Daniel A. Santamaria. Chicago: Neal-Schuman, an imprint of the American Library Association, 2015. 235 pp. Index. Softcover. $75.00.

After receiving *Extensible Processing for Archives and Special Collections: Reducing Processing Backlogs,* this reviewer has to admit the first thing she did was Google the definition of "extensible." *Oxford Dictionaries* defines it as "able to be extended; extendable." That bit of grammar education out of the way, Daniel Santamaria's volume proved to be not only delightfully accessible but also enlightening. In this relatively short book, considering the theory proposed, Santamaria lays out a lengthy and detailed strategy for an "iterative approach to archival processing that involves creating a baseline level of access to all holdings in an archival repository, then conducting additional processing based on user demand and further assessment of collections" (p. xi). Indeed, while user access to collections is the chief purpose of extensible processing, a secondary and significant benefit is that institutions will gain greater intellectual control as well as physical control over all of their collections versus just those that are historically significant enough to go to the head of the processing queue.

Santamaria is no novice to the More Product, Less Process theory introduced to the archival world in 2005 by Dennis Meissner and Mark Greene.[1] Santamaria has developed and is currently teaching the Society of American Archivists' (SAA) workshop on "Implementing MPLP"; he wrote "Module 3: Designing Descriptive and Access Systems of SAA's Archival Arrangement and Description";[2] and he received the SAA Coker Award in 2013 for "innovative developments in archival description."

At the heart of Santamaria's volume are two principles that build upon, or extend, if you will (pardon the pun), Meissner and Greene's MPLP model. Laid out in detail within chapters 2 and 3, the principles merit listing here as well. The first principle is a six-step extensible processing system: create baseline access; standardize description; aggregate management of collections; reduce both handling and processing; develop iterative processing; and view processing holistically versus individual collections (p. 16).

The second principle is the "Extensible Processing Cycle/Workflow" with seven crucial steps (synthesized as follows): review collection background; survey and design a plan for processing the collection; appraise; process the collection; develop metadata and then deliver it; and, finally, digitize and process more in depth as needed (p. 30).

The following chapters (4 through 8) discuss in depth collections assessment surveys as tools for reducing backlog; improving accessioning techniques with new collections; descriptive standards (DACS, EAD, and others); digitization projects to enable and facilitate access to digital content; and management and planning of the extensible processing program. This last chapter sheds light on developing a basic processing plan and tenets for managing the project using processing metrics.

Chapter 9 is reserved for addressing the different concerns and reservations the archival profession enumerates when challenged by MPLP and extensible processing theories. Santamaria handles these with aplomb, leaving one with no real ammunition for not implementing extensible processing. The gamut of issues such as user needs, appraisal, security, preservation, nonpaper formats, and born-digital materials are all addressed and knocked down, one by one.

Finally, the appendices (A through I) are the proverbial cherry on top of the extensible processing treat. They focus on eight case studies as well as provide finding aid examples and assorted forms and templates designed to assist an institution with implementing extensible processing. Santamaria has already accomplished the hard work of laying the foundations for extensible processing. One merely needs to follow the well-defined instructions.

Coming at this volume from a lone arranger's perspective, one especially appreciates the fact that Santamaria goes out of his way to assure smaller institutions and repositories that adapting extensible processing to meet their needs is well within their reach. In fact, in appendix A of the volume, one of the eight case studies cited is of a "Lone Arranger" who successfully implemented extensible processing and was able to process 800 linear feet and 80 collections in only 20 months! To quote Friedrich Nietzsche, "That which does not kill us makes us stronger!"

If one is considering implementing MPLP or simply thinking about the fundamental theory of extensible processing for basic user access, Santamaria's volume will be the deciding factor in determining that MPLP and extensible processing make sense. The only remaining question will be: "Why didn't we do it sooner?"

Shari Christy
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NOTES

1. Mark Greene and Dennis Meissner, "More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing," *The American Archivist* 68, no. 2 (2005): 208–63.
2. In Christopher J. Prom, ed., *Archival Arrangement and Description* (Chicago: SAA, 2013).