

Marcus C Robyns, *Using Functional Analysis in Archival Appraisal*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 2014. xx + 169 pp. ISBN 978 0 810887 97 8 (paperback). USD\$34.95.

In this book, Marcus Robyns's objective is to document a practical methodology of archival appraisal for the twenty-first century: a method that is 'workable and realistic' (p. 105) and can easily be adopted as a template by a lone arranger, an archivist often working alone with limited resources. To achieve this, Robyns examines the evolution of theoretical foundations and principal methodologies of appraisal, by articulating the differing opinions of notable professionals and outlining the appraisal models adopted by different national archives. He focuses on the Northern Michigan University method of appraisal, functional analysis and their practical implementation model.

A simplified model of functional analysis that does not follow textbook application, enables an effective and achievable approach and can be implemented within a reasonable timeframe, is definitely an attractive approach. To achieve this, Robyns firstly questions whether an approach that is 'well enough', that is, a simplified version of functional analysis, can still achieve the methodology's goals (p. xix). This approach certainly resonates with me. If your minimum objectives and outcomes for functional analysis are met, does it matter how you get there? Also, who is undertaking functional analysis, analysing results and using it to draft a retention and disposal schedule? Often it is not employees of national or state archives but, in the first instance, an employee of a government agency with minimal applied knowledge in appraisal. Therefore, developing practical tools anyone can easily interpret and implement is both desirable and necessary.

Robyns's objective is to document a practical and effective approach to functional analysis, and he achieves this. I feel, however, there is more focus placed on explaining the evolution of appraisal and the role of an archivist than detailing his practical model. This, I believe, is to implement a functional analysis that is 'carefully anchored in powerful and meaningful theories and ideas' (p. 99) but which is still achievable, particularly with minimal resources. Appraisal over the decades has been and continues to be a dynamic debate, as articulated simply and intelligibly by Robyns. He objectively summarises the key changes and evolution of appraisal by key professionals, which has created a really good resource that anyone, particularly students or people new to the profession, can follow. Referring to the book solely for this purpose will enable archivists, records managers, information managers and so on, to make informed decisions around their approach to appraisal, determining functional context, and record value and need.

Robyns's practical approach appears obvious, logical and practical. Even though the model is 'designed for a small institution of higher education' (p. xix), Robyns believes it can be adapted by any archivist. I agree. However, there are a couple of areas that may pose a challenge for an archivist. One of these is the ease of obtaining resources for an appraisal project when not affiliated with a higher education institute. Robyns makes recruiting for an appraisal project appear simple, but in reality, all areas of the model, such as research and data collection, may rest with the archivist or existing resources within an agency.

The other challenge is the selection of examples used to illustrate the model, which are based on a higher education institute. I feel additional or standard definitions are required. For example, the section on primary and secondary functions is a key part of the project and often poorly executed. Therefore clarification on identifying these

functions, which do not refer to theoretical opinions and institutional references, would be beneficial.

Additionally, is the prime purpose of functional appraisal to determine the archival value of a record (p. 73)? When undertaking a top-down approach to appraisal to rank and determine the important functions, wouldn't the value of most records be determined, not just ones with archival value? For example, a prime goal for a transport agency is to license drivers and issue vehicle registration. These records have a high value to the agency, individuals and community services (such as police) and feed into other key functions such as road safety and infrastructure. Does this function have archival value? If so, what are its components? My question is driven by a change in work practices, technology, a plethora of information, and a push for efficient and accountable practices; undertaking a functional analysis has far greater value than determining just the archival value of records.

Throughout this book, Robyns has demonstrated his passion for the archival profession and has written a really good resource on archival appraisal. It is a tool that will provide readers with a well-articulated account on the evolution of appraisal and a simplified, implementable model of functional analysis that does not compromise the profession or lose the importance of appraisal.

Kylie Good

Queensland State Archives

© 2015, Kylie Good

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01576895.2015.1088436>

Maja Kominko (ed.), *From Dust to Digital: Ten Years of the Endangered Archives Programme*, Open Book Publishers, Cambridge, 2015. lxviii + 654 pp. ISBN 978 1 783740 64 2 (digital version). GBP£29.95 (paperback). (<<http://www.openbookpublishers.com/reader/283#page/1/mode/1up>>) doi:10.11647/OBP.0052

This book is a celebration of 10 years of the Endangered Archives Programme (EAP), administered by the British Library. It showcases the historical importance and research potential of the digitised collections the programme has made possible. The EAP is funded by a generous grant by Hans Rausing and the broad objectives of the programme are to copy and preserve neglected, vulnerable or inaccessible archives and to make them freely accessible in the international domain for perpetuity.

Although 10 years have passed, the introduction highlights the ongoing need for such a programme: 'The keepers of fragile, at-risk archives often do not have the means of preserving them. Faced with conflicts and their aftermath, natural disasters, [war, climate change, neglect, planned or accidental destruction] and epidemics, not even governments can afford to secure the survival of their archival heritage ... We cannot expect them to shoulder the burden alone'.

The EAP encourages professional archivists and academics, researchers and amateur enthusiasts to apply for grants which are assessed by an international panel of experts. Over GBP£6 million and 240 grants have been awarded for the digital preservation of archives including manuscripts and audio recordings, with over four million digital