enemy of the possible', had a particular resonance with me. There are two brief case studies, a summary of recent and current research projects and activities, a table of online processing tools and 'further reading' as appendices.

Designing Descriptive and Access Systems, by Daniel A Santamaria, takes a wider approach to accessioning and description, referring to many of the standards and tools mentioned in the earlier modules. His emphasis is on implementation: how descriptive data transforms into finding aids for users, and what small repositories with limited resources can do to improve access for their users. For example, he discusses how to use web content management systems to produce 'catablogs', providing access to digital images through Flickr and using simple crowd-sourcing strategies to improve systems. His recommendations cover the 'simplest', 'more advanced' and 'most advanced' options for accessioning, description, finding aids and evaluating access systems. There are two substantial case studies, weblinks for the many tools mentioned, 'further reading', and sample workflows and tools for small repositories as appendices.

What then of the role of the editors of the volume, Prom and Frusciano? There's a seven-page introduction and some cross-referencing between the modules, but no doubt the more difficult contribution was the copyediting and checking of the numerous acronyms, technical details and web addresses.

Reference

Kathleen D Roe, *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts,* Society of American Archivists, Chicago, 2005.

Maggie Shapley
Australian National University
© 2013, Maggie Shapley
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01576895.2013.842278

Matthew S Hull, *Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan,* Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 2012. xiv + 301 pp. ISBN 978 0 520272 15 6 (paperback). US$26.95.

Matthew Hull is an associate professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Michigan. In his book, *Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan*, Hull examines the bureaucratic processes of government in the Central Development Authority (CDA), an agency established in 1960 with comprehensive planning, judicial and administrative powers to realise the original master plan of the capital Islamabad devised by the Greek architect Constantinos Doxiadis. This is an anthropological study about the creation, use and management of records, which looks beyond their transactional and evidential function to how they create associations and coalitions between people which often work against protecting the integrity of government, becoming destabilising and undermining instruments.

The introduction explains Hull's analytical focus. While writing and documents have long been of interest to both sociologists and anthropologists, the focus has generally been on looking *through* them rather than *at* them. Hull contends that 'as the main mechanism and *dominant emblem* of the formal dimension of bureaucracy' (p. 12, my emphasis),

documents have received scant attention. He proposes that documents as objects ('graphic artefacts') need to be looked at 'not as neutral purveyors of discourse, but as mediators that shape the significance of the linguistic signs inscribed on them' (p. 13). The British gave records the legal status of truth, first in the East India Company and then through colonial administrative procedures. It was this framework which facilitated corrupt activities where both internal and external actors engaged through a complex web of recordkeeping practices, and where records only had an indirect relationship to the activities they supported.

The rest of the book can be divided into two parts. The first three chapters examine the book's themes of 'places, people and paper' (p. 33), providing an overall picture of the interaction between the city vision for Islamabad, its organisational culture, relations between citizens and bureaucrats, and recordkeeping practices.

Chapter 1 charts the role of Doxiadis's Master Plan in formulating the city spaces of Islamabad according to political direction and bureaucratic management. Chapter 2 shows how visiting cards and parchis or 'chits' (slips of paper) on the one hand and more formal petitions on the other, differently shaped the ways people engage face-to-face with the bureaucracy other than through official documents. Chapter 3 looks at the process and practices around the management of files, the 'workhorse of the Pakistan bureaucracy' (p. 113) documenting the vast scope of administrative activities of the CDA.

The second part of the book traces the relations among places, people and paper by looking at specific projects. Chapter 4 demonstrates how lists of villagers to be compensated for expropriated land and other documents of the expropriation process have figured in a conflict that has brought the planned westward expansion of the city to a virtual halt. Chapter 5 shows that, while maps have been central to the planning of Islamabad, they have not been effective instruments of state control in managing the development of the city, and particularly in controlling illegal mosque building in the context of sectarian contests for sites.

The conclusion traces the broad story of postcolonial paper in Islamabad and comments on the possibilities for introducing newer electronic forms. It has been suggested that the development of electronic systems would prevent the growth and influence of paper networks exposed in this book, providing much-needed administrative transparency, however attempts to introduce electronic recordkeeping have not been particularly successful. A business system acquired in 1996 to manage land holdings and compensation records sits unused, because engaging with the system would mean that information would be readily available to everyone, undermining 'relations of influence organised through files' (p. 161). In his conclusion Hull contends that his study has shown 'that whether transparency programs are pursued through intensified paper documentation or electronic records, the result will be neither transparency nor opacity, but a host of new forms of mediation that will invite unexpected forms of participation from beyond the office' (p. 257).

Each chapter in this book is filled with stories of corrupt practices where records play an essential role and where recordkeeping activities provide opportunities for networked coalitions to alter outcomes. For example, the endless rounds of file movements and authorisations required to action land dealings enable officers to manipulate results by stopping, slowing or accelerating the passage of the files. The security of the records is violated through the practice of using the record room as a kind of 'lending library' (p. 240) from which plans are withdrawn and adapted for new houses, frustrating CDA attempts to have unique house plans drawn for every house. Security is also an issue

surrounding the agency's attempts to control the copying and circulation of maps, exacerbating problems around the construction of unauthorised mosques.

For those without a background in anthropology, the language and the theoretical framework may make this book a challenging read. Records are 'graphic artefacts', which have 'material qualities'; files are 'networked documents that move along narrow paths, greatly restricting the range of people who have access to their contents' (p. 63). While this study is not written for the recordkeeping professional, it provides a fascinating insight into recordkeeping practices of the CDA and is a powerful statement about understanding the context in which records are created and used. Hull shows how records, while developed and maintained within a highly procedural environment, provide evidence to enable the business of an organisation to be undertaken (it is noted that the main elements of Doxiadis's vision have been realised) they are not always the 'obedient tools of government' (p. 245). He has demonstrated how recordkeeping practices can be deployed, used and manipulated to influence outcomes according to the different political agendas of a wide network of interested parties involved in the transactions, with the CDA efforts to control activities being undermined by the agency's own records.

Colleen McEwen
© 2013, Colleen McEwan

Michael Piggott, *Archives and Societal Provenance: Australian Essays,* Oxford, Chandos Publishing, 2012. xxiv + 334 pp. ISBN 978 1 843347 12 5 (paperback), ISBN 978 1 780633 78 7 (online). AUD$89.00.

One encouraging sign of the growing maturity of the archives and recordkeeping profession comes with the appearance of several recent books of extended thematic argument focusing on the nature and purposes of records creation, management and use. Michael Piggott's volume of 'Australian essays' focuses on 'the historical and societal setting of the Australian archives and records landscape' (p. 2) as a means of exploring 'some of the connections between Australian society and its records' (p. 4). While deeply rooted in a national–continental–societal context, it offers a valuable contribution to the international archival discourse.

As a laureate of the Australian Society of Archivists and a prominent figure in Australian archives and recordkeeping circles for four decades, the author needs no further introduction. This collection of essays brings together disparate writings and presentations (1980–2010) from a variety of archival, library and historical venues with several essays prepared for this publication. Each of the earlier essays has been updated with minor revisions and a new introduction and/or conclusion. In effect, it's a 'greatest hits' album, but re-mastered with added lyrics and new textures (context) of instrumentation.

The concept anchoring this collection of essays is societal provenance. Articulated by Canadian archivist Tom Nesmith, this view emphasises the breadth and depth of records, which 'reflect and shape societal processes' (p. 3). Records should thus be