

retrieves something that an official has thrown out, she advises crediting him with its rescue. There is a fascinating section on the Illinois name index, designed to include "all names found in documents in the Illinois archives prior to and including the year 1850." However much comprehensive name indexing has been swamped in the recent flood of paper, in Illinois in Margaret Norton's day, indexing was done with exacting care. In her other approaches to description she omits nothing. The archivist must include all series in paper description, whether or not the records are in the archives. Moreover, her grasp of practical and technical problems encompasses the design of forms, the constitution of typewriter inks, the handling of fragile documents, microfilming (where she advises a healthy suspicion of salesmen), and a host of details of archivists' daily work, of which she had first-hand experience. The technology of archives may have advanced greatly since the writing of these articles, but Norton's good sense and fine appreciation of the archivist's place in the administrative process attach a permanent value to her words.

The thirty articles in this book, written between 1930 and 1956, are organized into well-structured chapters ranging from "The Scope and Function of Archives" through interesting expositions on "The Comparison of Archival and Library Techniques," "Physical Properties of Archives," "The Protection of Records from Disaster," "Records Disposal" (really a chapter on records scheduling) to a finale on "The Archivist and Records Management."

Margaret Norton is unfailingly cogent and always interesting. For example, she leaves us with this advice: "Avoid asking the attorney general for opinions. Nine times out of ten he will say 'No' and it will be almost impossible to get that 'No' exchanged for a 'Yes'." The flavour of that advice is sprinkled throughout a book that is a delight to read. Archivists everywhere will be grateful for its publication and remember its author with warmth and admiration.

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Draft Model Law on Archives: Description and Text. SALVATORE CARBONE and RAOUL GUËZE. Paris: Unesco, 1972. 225 p. (Documentation, libraries and archives: Studies and research, 1) \$4.50 (U.S.) (Aussi disponible en français).

Unesco and the International Council of Archives jointly sponsored this draft for a law on archives. At the basis of the draft is the extensive experience of the Council which had promoted, through *Archivum*, studies in comparative legislation. The formation of innumerable new independent states following World War II made urgent the task of suggesting proven guidelines for archival legislation, before the documentation of the previous administrations and the relics of past periods of history disappeared through neglect.

The draft is detailed, comprising 238 articles, many extending to several paragraphs. This is not surprising, as all eventualities had to be foreseen, especially for countries where legislation and administrative procedures do not yet offer any parallel guidelines. In each country, the task of adapting and selecting belongs to the parties concerned with promoting the legislation. The length of the draft is understandable also because of its ambitious scope: it covers general principles, administrative structure, personnel policy, pre-storage and deposits, donations, purchases, expropriation, the selection of documents, secret documents, public access to and dissemination of information and the relationship of public to private archives.

The draft foresees a network of archives and defines their levels of responsibility, their coordination and their technical services. Professional institutes are included in the legislation, as required for the qualification of competent personnel and the promotion of their career.

The guiding principles behind this draft must be explained to prevent misunderstanding. Archives are seen as state institutions established for the protection and utilization of a national heritage which belongs to the community. The community has the eminent right and duty to ensure that the records of its history are preserved and professionally managed. The role of the state is seen as supplementary, however, and is not intended to supplant private initiative. In the light of this legislation, individuals could not conceivably own archival materials; ownership is rather a trust.

Interesting also is the understanding of the archivist's profession adopted by the draft. State archives are not to be confused with a department's files. Documents belong to state archives only after their usefulness to administration has ceased. At that point, the archivist is an historian, who endeavours to reconstruct the original framework within which the documents belonged. Archives are not simply deposits, but historical research centres, and archivists are involved in scientific research work in order to index, catalogue and disseminate information. This aspect of the archivist's role makes his profession similar to that of an academic. From this flows the autonomous administration of archives, under a council which has representatives from the universities and other cultural agencies, and whose decisions are collegial.

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Museum Cataloging in the Computer Age. ROBERT G. CHENHALL.
Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1975.
viii, 261 p. ill. ISBN 0 910050 12 0 Members: \$13.00, Non-members:
\$17.50.

Technology has been the holy of holies in the temple of our age and the technocrats have been its high priests. This attitude is pervasive among archivists at a time when the temple is no longer as sturdy as it once was. Such an attitude is unacceptable when archivists find themselves in an environment where, to perform their functions, they cannot avoid the use of computer technology or its byproducts. What archivists need is basic training in computer technology to realize that there is no holy of holies, that the high priests are really jealous witch doctors—a role they maintain by their mumbo-jumbo incantations to a box with flashing lights. If such training is not immediately available one might think that a good introductory book would be able to answer most questions archivists have about computers.

It was with great interest that I read the flyleaf's claim that this book was "the definitive work on the subject" of computerized museum cataloguing. We can expect such extravagant claims from a sales promotion and absolve the author of any blame. I glanced quickly through the table of contents and decided that probably Sections 4 ("What to Record: The Content of Museum Catalogs") and 6 ("Computer Systems to do the Work") would be of minimal value to archivists since they seemed to relate only to the museum world. I had hopes that the balance of the book might tarnish, if not crack, and possibly destroy, the "graven images" that archivists have of computer technology. My hopes soared as I read in the preface that Chenhall had begun the book as "an archaeological data bank instruction manual," but had soon realized that "there was a need for some kind of