

repository holdings must be made by each repository based on its own internal needs.” At this point a footnote is provided giving examples of hierarchical levels from U.S. archival and manuscript practice. An example of the Canadian *fonds* hierarchy could just as easily have been given here as yet another approach to this problem without diluting at all the thrust of the principle. Although nothing specific is said regarding “complex *fond d’archives*,” it is easy to see them as another “appropriate level of description.”

Further, Ms. MacNeil’s contention that “*APPM* prescribes only one analytical technique for linking descriptions” is also incorrect. Rule 1.7B3 states, “Make a note concerning any complex hierarchical relationship between catalog records, i.e., when the material being described is a component part or subunit of another collection or series that is an existing bibliographic entity.” Although the examples of suggested introductory wording may imply an “In” analytic technique, the intention clearly is to document *any* relationship. In a MARC-AMC record this note provides the intellectual link to related material; the actual machine link is made in a field not subject to the constraints of descriptive cataloging. While it is true that there may be better ways to describe complex hierarchical relationships, it is nonetheless a reality that to a large degree these descriptive rules are constrained by the fact of their implementation within specific bibliographic software and systems. On the other hand, given the degree to which those systems so far have been willing and able to change to accommodate archival needs, one may be sanguine about problems in this area being similarly accommodated; once we all agree on what our specific needs are with respect to expressing hierarchical relationships, it is altogether likely that the systems can be changed accordingly.

While I very much appreciate the necessity of the process the Canadian archival community is going through to arrive at a consensus on descriptive standards, I also believe that eventual agreement on a North American standard is in the long-term interests of both countries. I only hope that misunderstanding and lack of communication do not become an artificial barrier to reaching that agreement.

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### ***The Reviewer Responds***

Steven Hensen’s letter is written in response to a notice that appeared in *Archivaria* 30. In that notice, I was not so much raising objections to *APPM2* as pointing out differences between what has become the American standard for archival description and the standard that recently has emerged in the Canadian archival community. Although I admit my comments were necessarily elliptical, I do not believe they represent “a substantial and serious misunderstanding of the text.” I welcome, therefore, the opportunity to respond to the criticisms which Steven Hensen proffers in his letter.

The first point with which Mr. Hensen takes issue is my characterization of *APPM2* in terms of its orientation toward either collection- or item-level description. In arguing against this characterization, he attempts to draw a fundamental distinction between the “collective description of groupings of archival material” and collection-level description, a distinction that is not evident in *APPM2*. The phrase “collective

description” appears in the introductory rules, specifically as the heading to rule 0.10, the text of which reads as follows: “This manual approaches the problems of archival cataloging principally at the collection-level . . . [because] collection level description supports the principles of archival unity . . . [and because] collection level description is practical.” Since *APPM2* equates collective description with collection level description, my use of the latter phrase rather than the former does not seem inappropriate.

Nor is it inappropriate or inaccurate to speak about *APPM2*’s orientation toward collection- or item-level description, when the rules themselves refer specifically to collections and items rather than to neutral “groupings of archival material.” In rule 1.1B3, for example, the user is instructed to record the name of the person, family or corporate body responsible for “the collection or item”; rule 1.1B5 explains how to record dates for an “archival collection” and for “a single item”; rule 1.5B provides one set of instructions for recording the physical extent of “collections of archival material,” and another for “single manuscripts” and so on. While the rules do occasionally refer to other groupings of archival material, specifically record groups and record series, their treatment is identical to that of collections. I shall not belabour the defence further. My reason for remarking on *APPM2*’s orientation in the first place was simply to point out that such an orientation, “places [*APPM2*] somewhat at odds with the standards for archival description currently emerging in Canada,” an observation which deserves further elaboration.

Although the *APPM2* rules may be used for description at any level, they are not designed to accommodate, in any substantial way, the hierarchical description of archival material. As Hensen points out, the rules do not mandate the hierarchical levels that may exist within any given body of archival material, on the assumption that such levels cannot be standardized outside the context of a given repository. The approach to archival description above the item level is a generic one, therefore, which means that the same set of rules will apply to any grouping of archival material, whether it be a collection, a record group, a record series, subseries or file. The terms “records,” “papers,” “collection” and “collection of papers,” for example, are used in *APPM2* as general titles for collections, record groups, record series and, presumably, any other grouping or sub-grouping of archival records containing multiple forms of material. When archival material falls somewhere between the collection and item levels, the rules do not give any guidance on how to describe that material specifically in its hierarchical context. The only provision for hierarchical description is in rule 1.7B3, the linking entry complexity note, which simply indicates the existence of a hierarchical relationship between the part being described and the whole to which it belongs.

This approach is very different from that taken in the *Rules for Archival Description (RAD)*, which is the Canadian standard for archival description developed by the Bureau of Canadian Archivists’ Planning Committee on Descriptive Standards. Unlike *APPM2*, *RAD* is based explicitly on specified hierarchical levels, beginning with the whole of the records of a given creator (the fonds), and proceeding down to series, files and items. The relationships between and among the various hierarchical levels are reflected in the rules governing their description, since the level at which the material is being described will directly determine, among other things, the chief source of information on which the description will be based, the manner in which data elements such as the title will be recorded, and the depth of detail that will be given in the description. For example, a series-level description will not include dates of creation if

they are identical to the dates that appear in the description of the fonds to which the series belongs.

This brings me to the second point on which Steven Hensen and I disagree. I suggested in my notice that *APPM2*'s analytical technique for linking descriptions, which I labelled an "in" analytic, is inadequate when applied to the description of a complex fonds d'archives. Although Hensen disputes the analogy, I still maintain that likening the linking entry complexity note to an "in" analytic is an accurate way of describing the specific method by which the analysis of part to whole relationships is achieved in *APPM2*. According to the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules* (2nd ed., 1988 revision), "analysis is the process of preparing a bibliographic record that describes a part or parts of an item for which a comprehensive entry has been made." An "in" analytic entry is one method of analysis, and it consists of a description of the part followed by a short citation of the whole in which the part occurs. In *APPM2*, part-to-whole relationships are documented in the linking entry complexity note, which is used "when the material being described is a component part or subunit of another collection or series that is an existing bibliographic entity." The note consists of appropriate introductory wording such as "Forms part of" or "In," followed by the title of the hierarchically superior unit. That the note can be used to document "any complex hierarchical relationship" is irrelevant; it is the method of analysis, not the specific contents of the citation, that identifies the linking entry complexity note as an "in" analytic.

Moreover, the fact that the note can be used to document any complex hierarchical relationship is the source of its inadequacy in representing a complex fonds d'archives. Although rule 0.12, portions of which Hensen already has cited in his letter, suggests that the intention of the linking entry complexity note is to ensure that "a folder level record will refer to and clearly be subordinate to the record for the subseries of which it is a part, the subseries record to the series record, and so on," this intention is undercut, first, by a footnote which indicates that "the number of levels in such a hierarchy is not prescribed"; and by the sentence immediately following it, which reads, "What is important is that, for any particular body of archival material, there should be a record at the most comprehensive level if there are to be additional records at any subordinate level." These two qualifications effectively nullify any requirement to place the description of a subordinate unit in the context of each hierarchically superior unit to which it belongs. The linking entry complexity note does not require that when an item is described it be linked to a description of the file of which it forms a part, and that the description of the file be linked to a description of the subseries to which it belongs. The rule requires only that the description of the part be linked to the description of the "hierarchically superior unit." Since, at lower levels of description, there may be a number of hierarchically superior units related both directly and indirectly to the component part or subunit being described, it is reasonable to wonder which of these higher levels must already be described in order to place the part in its hierarchical context; and safe to assume, given the wording of the rule and the examples that accompany it, that only the most comprehensive level, i.e., the collection, record group, or record series, must be described in order to place the part in context. The need to present the description of a part in the context of a description of the hierarchically superior unit to which it is most closely related is not built into the linking entry complexity note. On these grounds, I suggested that it was an inadequate means of accommodating the description of a complex fonds d'archives.

Having said that, I shall admit that it is perhaps unfair to burden *APPM2* with the responsibility to accommodate all the hierarchical relationships that may exist within a given body of archival material. The rules are intended for use in the construction of archival catalogues. Since a catalogue record created in accordance with the rules normally would be a summary or abstract of information contained in other finding aids, it may be more useful to see *APPM2*'s purpose as one of providing a summary record of archival holdings, which, ideally, will point to more detailed finding aids that illuminate the breadth and depth of hierarchical relationships. Because the Canadian rules for archival description are intended for use in the construction of finding aids of all kinds, and are not limited in their application to the creation of catalogue records, the archival community here is currently experimenting with the possibilities of an alternative analytical technique — multilevel description — that may better meet the need to represent complex hierarchical relationships in the context of descriptive rules. The technique is used for preparing descriptions of a fonds and its parts where separate descriptions for both the parts, and the fonds as a whole, are required. In multilevel description, each part of a fonds is described in relation to another part in a multilevel hierarchy of linked, interdependent records. A fundamental principle of multilevel description is that the description of a part must always be presented in the context of its immediate parent record. Whether the multilevel technique will prove a better solution to the vexatious problem of describing the various parts of a complex fonds d'archives in their hierarchical context is, at the moment, an open question.

Like Steven Hensen, I believe that agreement on a North American standard for archival description is in the long-term interests of the Canadian and American archival communities. In this respect, *APPM2* deserves much credit for opening up the possibilities for such a standard. Nevertheless, I also believe that the prospects for eventual agreement will be enhanced, not diminished, if we acknowledge the very real differences that exist between the Canadian and American approaches to archival description, and work toward their mutual accommodation.

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