

**Manual for the arrangement and description of archives : drawn up by direction of the Netherlands Association of Archivists / by S. Muller, J.A. Feith and R. Fruin ; translation of the second edition by Arthur H. Leavitt ; with new introductions by Peter Horsman [and others].**

Muller, S., Fz., 1848-1922.

Chicago, IL : Society of American Archivists, c2003.

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE 2003 REISSUE<sup>1</sup>

### ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION PRIOR TO THE *MANUAL*

The *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* (1898) is usually regarded as a starting point of archival theory and methodology. It seems as if the concepts and methods that are formulated within its pages appear out of the blue—despite the fact that the authors themselves asserted the contrary. What is the link between the *Manual* and the Dutch way of arranging and describing archives in the century that preceded its publication? Is it a logical milestone in a presumed evolution of that practice, and can the *Manual*, from the perspective of such an evolution, be considered a typical Dutch product?

### Arrangement and Description 1795–1873

Archival records originally served to settle legal disputes and to support the administrative apparatus. In the course of the eighteenth century, however, Dutch administrators began to consider records as a source of knowledge about the history of their cities and thus about the heroic acts of their own forefathers. They encouraged the publication of collections of charters and city histories in which authentic documents were used as irrefutable evidence. The political upheaval of 1795 (when the Batavian Republic replaced the Republic of the United Netherlands) further changed the legal-antiquarian interest in documents into a historical-antiquarian interest. As the new political situation signified a real break in the legal system, the archives of the previous regime lost their primary administrative-

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<sup>1</sup> We condensed our 105-page introduction to the reissue of the *Manual* on the occasion of its centennial in 1998: P.J. Horsman; F.C.J. Ketelaar, and T.H.P.M. Thomassen, *Tekst en context van de Handleiding voor het ordenen en beschrijven van archieven van 1898* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998).

legal function. Archives became, in the first place, a collection of historical sources, within which the formal documents, as irrefutable evidence of the historical facts, were considered to be the most important.

***Historical Records and the State: The Historical Motive.***

The efforts made by the state in relation to its old archives were aimed at encouraging patriotism, encouraging civil morality, and maintaining the national character. In 1802 the first national archivist, Hendrik van Wijn, was appointed. Various provinces and cities also appointed archivists, especially after the establishment of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1813. In collecting the pre-1795 archives, archivists put together, as far as possible, *what belonged together*. It was obvious that the charters<sup>2</sup> should be put with other charters and that maps should be put with maps; it was handy to have the financial administration of all domains collected together; and it gave a better overview if the remainder of the archive was arranged according to historically important subjects or the areas of responsibility of the administrations that were operating since 1813. As long as archivists did not mix the archives of local bodies with those of the province or those of the province with those of the state, they had a free hand in how to arrange the material.

When archivists had assembled the archives in their repositories and had put together those matters that belonged together, then they had to describe the records anew, because the original administrative inventories and lists had become unusable. There was a preference for a *general inventory* of the entire repository.

An inventory consisting of a systematic summary of records met the needs of the administrators, who had to be able to consult the documents in their legal-administrative context, better than the needs of the historians who wanted to know the contents of individual records. Publication of the texts of all charters was the method preferred by historians and antiquarians. By way of preparation for such publications, the archivist compiled a chronological register, a calendar of all charters in chronological order.

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<sup>2</sup> A charter is a document, usually sealed, granting specific rights, setting forth aims and principles, embodying formal agreements, authorizing special privileges or exemptions: Peter Walne (ed.), *Dictionary of Archival Terminology* (K.G. Saur: Munchen, 1984) nr. 75.

*The Chronological Register.* The most difficult problem when creating chronological registers was deciding what was to be included. The choice depended to a high degree on the size, the structure, and the composition of the archives involved. If they consisted of charters and loose documents that were not too great in number, then the most appropriate choice was an item-by-item arrangement and description. The larger the archive was, and the more it consisted of aggregated records and large series of registers, the less likely was it to be considered suitable for complete item-by-item arrangement and description.

To what extent did early nineteenth-century archivists allow themselves to be inspired by historical tradition and discipline? They were all, in one way or another, rooted in the legal-antiquarian tradition of publishing historical documents in so-called charter books and city histories. Isaac Nijhoff, who was archivist of the province of Gelderland in the first half of the nineteenth century, was the first archivist in the Netherlands to apply insights from diplomatics to the arrangement and description of archives. To Nijhoff, the main requirement was that records be arranged in chronological order. In addition, calendars had to consist of a number of fixed descriptive elements, which were ordered according to format.

Most archives from the Middle Ages could still be made accessible by chronological registers if one wanted to restrict search possibilities to documents that were created as pieces of evidence. Such archives were, after all, arsenals of charters that were created by religious and secular potentates to prove their claims to power. But archives from the sixteenth century on caused problems. The administrative activities of princes, lords, and cities had become so extensive by that time that other legal deeds apart from charters had become indispensable as evidence and memory. Did analyses of these deeds now also have to be included in chronological registers? And if this were to be done, how was one to deal with the archives of the collegial administrations from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in which authentic pieces of evidence were included even in the daybooks of the registrars and the registers of resolutions?

There were archivists who did indeed shift the limits of their

calendars. Chronological registers that were originally intended only for the description of charters were used to make other components of the archive accessible, too. In the first instance, of course, it was the registered deeds that came under scrutiny.

Dutch archivists in the nineteenth century initially considered the community (the city, province, or state) to be the creator of an archive. The object of archivists' activities was to make accessible the historical archive of the community and the whole of the remaining legal records created by the city, the province, or the state. A community thus had one historical archive, which was kept in the archive repository of that community and could be described in one inventory. Archives from various communities that were kept in the same archive repository were, in principle, not mixed with each other. There was no consensus about the arrangement of the archive of a community. In general the most important documents (the charters and later the other deeds also) were located and described in chronological order. There were no set rules for the arrangement of the other documents. Depending on the idiosyncrasies of the archive and the person doing the archiving, they were arranged—either by form of material, in alphabetic order, or according to historical periods—according to some other artificial classification, or according to a natural classification, that is, a classification drawn from the organization of the administration itself.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, leading archivists succeeded in reaching agreement—at least on the basic ideas—about the way in which archives were to be inventoried. The archives held by one community were not, in any event, to be amalgamated with the archives of the other. Also, series and separate archive elements were to be left intact.

### **Arrangement and Description 1874–1898**

***A New Generation.*** The year 1874 can be considered the start of a new era of archives management in the Netherlands. The revival was slow to get going, especially in the early years. Most archivists belonged to the generation that had started work in the 1850s. They were still using the methods that had

been tested by Nijhoff and his colleagues and were slowly becoming set in their ways. The fundamental discussion about alternatives was conducted by the new generation of archivists who had more modern ideas about the study of history, diplomacy, and the arrangement and description of archives. In 1874 Samuel Muller Fz.<sup>3</sup>—having followed a term of lectures at the Paris *École des Chartes*—was appointed city archivist of Utrecht. His contemporary, Theodoor van Riemsdijk, assisted him for a while in organizing and arranging the Utrecht city museum, prior to being appointed to the post of city archivist in Zwolle in 1875. Each of them had to create the arrangement for the archives in his repository. They exchanged their theories and experiences in many letters. “If we regard the matter purely theoretically then we are, I believe, completely in agreement,” van Riemsdijk wrote to Muller in 1880. Muller had then just published his archival principles in the annual report on the city archive. Van Riemsdijk concluded in a book about the registry of the States-General in 1885 that the systematic structure of the archives must be matched to the old classification.

Archivists still had to agree about two matters: a more precise delimitation of the documents to be described and the arrangement criterion to be used. Was the communal historical archive a whole that could also be inventoried as a whole, or did it consist of various archives that would have to be described in separate inventories? Should the physical structure of the archive as they found it be the criterion to be applied, or should the documents be arranged in accordance with a natural classification that was derived from the organization that formed the archive?

Progress was first achieved in the discussion about the arrangement criterion. It was already apparent that the wayward manner of arranging used by earlier nineteenth-century archivists had caused much damage. These archivists had undermined the authentic character of these archives by placing the documents in chronological order regardless of their provenance, but also in general by replacing the original structure of these archives with one of their own making. In

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<sup>3</sup> Meaning Frederik's son, to distinguish him from his cousins.

addition, their methods of arranging were not generally applicable. The piece-by-piece chronological arrangement was too time-consuming and suitable only for an archive consisting of separate documents, if one did not wish to pull apart all series and bound registers. A chronological ordering did not provide an overview of the content of the archive, and undated documents could not be classified.

There was a growing tendency to respect the original order when processing a particular archive; this acquired increasingly stronger theoretical support. That support was in part derived from diplomatics. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the principles of genetic diplomatics evolved, which concentrated attention more on the relationship between the form of the record and its creation and development. This gave a powerful impulse to the practice of chancery history. Van Riemsdijk—and his 1885 book on the registry of the States-General—is the most important manifestation of this impulse. Van Riemsdijk placed the intellectual center of gravity of the inventory process at the level of the organization of the administration and more particularly in the organization of the administrative process, which the arrangement of the archive was presumed to mirror.

**Defining the Archival Fonds.** The “communal historical archive” approach of the early nineteenth-century archivists seemed to be increasingly more cumbersome to maintain. It was principally a useful approach for the archives of a city. The municipal administrative bodies of the *ancien régime* (that is, the time of the confederated Republic of the United Netherlands before 1795) demonstrated a relatively large organic cohesion, and the same applied to the archives that they had produced. At the level of the provinces the approach was, however, applicable to a lesser degree. The legal predecessors of the separate provinces demonstrated much less cohesion and fewer similarities, so that their old archives were much more difficult to demarcate. Moreover, it was not always certain who was the legal predecessor of whom. Thus the former sovereign provinces of the confederation could be considered as the legal predecessors of the new provinces, but also as the legal predecessors of central government in the new unitary state. At

the local level the term "old archive" had a much simpler meaning for the archivist than it had at the provincial or central level. Along with this, the arrangement and organization of the archive of an entire community appeared to be a very ambitious project. Even if archivists were able to describe the historical archive of the community in its entirety in a chronological register or in a general inventory, then the first new acquisition would make that register or inventory incomplete again. More and more archive materials were acquired, along with more post-1813 records that included both loose documents and complete court archives. There was a growing tendency among archivists to distinguish the separate archives of agencies within the archives of a community and to describe those agency archives as separate fonds.

The growing tendency to respect the original order was thus gradually underpinned with a theoretical basis. In the archive, a relationship and a certain order existed that were based on the former organization of the administration, and with the retention of that relationship, the documents only needed to be given a better and more systematic classification.

***The Arrangement Standard to Be Used.*** Progress was also achieved in the development of a standard for arrangement. In the 1880s the notion that the structure of the archive itself should be considered as the criterion for arranging it rapidly gained popularity among archivists. "The view that is winning more and more ground is that when arranging an archive as far as possible its old classification should be re-established. I readily place myself on the side of the advocates of this point of view." Thus Muller opened his foreword to his catalogue of the fonds of the collegiate Chapter of *Sint Pieter* (1886). The structure of the series and the separate items had to be respected, and the documents from the community, but also those of the separate departments of the community, had to be kept together.

But when it came to the way in which the original structure ought to be respected, opinions differed. In van Riemsdijk's view, the chronological series of registers should be separated from the charters. Muller was of the opinion that the van Riemsdijk method would lead to searches having to be made for



documents on the same topic in different sections of the inventory. It was, according to Muller, not the form of the document, but its contents that ought to define its place in the archive, and that applied not only to the charters but also to the maps. He called for what van Riemsdijk considered to be disturbing the old order: the inclusion of the charters in the taxonomy of the inventory and their arrangement according to a natural classification.

## THE COMPOSITION OF THE *MANUAL*

In 1891, a growing awareness of professional communality in the Netherlands led to the formation of the first professional association for archivists in the world: the Association of Archivists in The Netherlands (or Netherlands Association of Archivists) (*Vereniging van Archivarissen in Nederland* [VAN]).

Both the annual meeting of VAN and the journal founded in 1892 by the association, *Nederlandsch Archievenblad*, became forums for discussions about the technical aspects and the dissemination of methods for arrangement and description. In addition, van Riemsdijk, having been made general state archivist in 1887, tried to reach agreement in the annual meeting of state archivists about the classification of the state archive repositories. The material was—as we have seen before—not new, nor were the participants in the debate unprepared.

In the first volume of *Archievenblad*, the state archivist in Drenthe, Seerp Gratama, published a number of basic principles that were to form the core of the new theory and that can in part be found, almost word for word, in the later *Manual*. Following the example set by Muller, he arrived at a definition of the concept “archive” as an “organic whole,” the “sediment of actions” of the entity forming the archive. He first penned the metaphor that “the skeleton” of an archive consists of the “protocols, in which the actions of representatives are written down.” He also wrote that an inventory need be no more than a summary of the contents of the archive, not an analysis of the contents of all records.

For Muller, the question that was still pending was whether models for inventories needed to be drawn up, or whether a

generally applicable theory of how to create an inventory needed to be developed. The needs of the small body of archivists were primarily focused around practical instructions, formulas and such for the creation of inventories. Muller initially had something similar in mind; he even proposed, as a sort of remote ideal, that a manual for the archivist might develop from the categorized statements of the majority of the members. But because a manual had not been written, he pleaded for the development of archival methods and not for the formulation of models. Each archive is unique, but the method of dealing with it, the principles, and the terminology should be the same.

The board of VAN tried to structure the discussion on the content. Muller revealed his thoughts in an article on the main principles for the classification of archives, which he concluded with three succinct statements. Gratama, who was broadly in agreement with Muller, preferred a debate about Muller's conclusions to one about his own hypotheses. The members' annual meeting in 1893 was completely taken up with Muller's theories that had become classic—and for which he had already laid the foundation in 1879 in the report on the Utrecht city archives. With a few editorial changes the members accepted the proposals, which five years later appeared in the *Manual* as sections 1, 15, 16, 50, and 66.

Once elected president of VAN in 1893, Muller did not abandon the initiative. The board drew up a number of categories of topics about which discussions, both oral and written, were to be held. It is not, of course, a matter of chance that these categories almost perfectly matched the chapters of the later *Manual*. Nonetheless, these topics were not dealt with quickly in the annual meetings. Robert Fruin, state archivist in Zeeland, could not completely agree with the formulas proposed by Gratama with respect to the "skeleton" and the old order. Only the first point was resolved in the members' meeting in 1894: a decision was made about what was later to become section 20 of the *Manual*. The second, about the original order, was to be dealt with the following year. Fruin—who realized that he would not get the support of the majority of the members—saw little point in a further defense of his theories. The board then

decided to drop this way of dealing with the matter and appointed a commission of three members to whom the task of drawing up guidelines for the arrangement and description of Dutch archives was entrusted. The composition of the commission took some time to complete, and it was only in the autumn of 1895 that the commission started its work. The three-man commission formed by Muller, Johan Feith (who was the state archivist for Groningen), and—after a few strings were pulled—Fruin took on the job.

The trio started by formulating a number of propositions and by dividing the *Manual* into chapters. For each chapter Muller wrote the introductory section. Muller, Feith, and Fruin then each wrote a number of commentaries, conceived changes in the propositions (it was only in July 1897 that this term was changed, at Fruin's suggestion, to "sections"), and provided commentary on each other's work. To this end they met a number of times in Utrecht, but the majority of the discussions were conducted in writing; each of them wrote his comments on the manuscript, which circulated among the three. Sometimes they only arrived at an agreement with difficulty. Thus Fruin concluded the discussion with Muller about section 7: "I regret the decision of the Master, but consider it better to remain silent about the entire matter. Therefore cross it off." In some instances the advice of colleagues was sought.

Fruin wrote almost all of chapter 6 and half of chapters 1 and 5. Muller and Feith wrote most of chapters 2 and 4, while Muller and Fruin wrote chapter 3. Of the hundred sections (with explanation), forty-three are based on a draft by Fruin. Feith provided the text for twenty-six sections, while Muller wrote thirty. (Muller and Feith together wrote section 65.) The introduction was written by Muller, who probably also did the final editing. The way the work was done led to many repetitions in the text and to a rather irregular style. Fruin felt that Feith's laconic style contrasted so starkly with the other detailed, if not verbose, commentaries that everyone would instantly be able see which pieces Feith wrote. He argued for reworking so that greater unity could be achieved.

Muller, Feith, and Fruin were in agreement about the main

principles. As a result, as Muller remembered in 1907, “editing of the book, to which each of us in turn almost automatically brought new elements into the lively discussions, gradually and without effort moved forward; almost imperceptibly the book grew, acquiring form and shape. Thus the dry work was for us a ‘stimulating’ activity without the least unpleasantness—a task, which has left us all with the most friendly memories.”

Each of the three authors contributed examples, which were used in the commentaries. More than half of the examples are drawn from the Utrecht archives—with which Muller and Fruin were very familiar. There are sporadic references to literature and more often references to published inventories. The German and French manuals on diplomatics by Bresslau and Giry are referred to, and Muller, Feith, and Fruin also seemed to be familiar with other German and French writers, whom they did not actually always mention by name. There is one reference to the Tuscan authors Lupi and Galeotto (section 16); the explanation in section 36 deals with the English concept of custody. Explicit references are made a number of times to the ministerial regulations of 1897. Prior to the publication of the *Manual*, the minister of internal affairs had issued regulations for the state archives. These regulations were intended to terminate the discussion that had been going on since 1880 about plans for the organization of the state archive depots. As state archivists, Muller, Feith, and Fruin were bound by these regulations; as members of VAN they therefore brought sections 1, 53, and 70 of their draft *Manual* in line with the ministerial regulations. There are naturally citations from or references to what the state archivists discussed in their meetings.

The triumvirate met in Utrecht on July 2, 1897. Fruin brought the manuscript into line with the decisions taken and provided the one hundred sections with their final numbering. Feith and Muller tied up some loose ends. By halfway through July the manuscript was almost finished. At the beginning of October the final decision on the layout had been made, and the printer began typesetting. As a result of the many corrections, however, the book was finally ready only in May 1898. All members of VAN received a copy. Already apparently exhausted

by the theoretical debate, they agreed to the proposal that there would be no discussion about it during the annual meeting, but rather that any criticisms should be vented in *Archievenblad*. If a new edition was ever considered necessary, that edition could be brought into line with the comments made, then revised and voted upon as necessary.

Every new member of the association was obliged to purchase a copy of the *Manual*. In addition, archives and libraries at home and abroad acquired the book. In 1910, only eighteen copies of the original edition of 310 were left in stock with the publisher. Muller and Fruin (Feith died in 1913) set to work on a revision, but such a difference of opinion arose between the two that the board decided simply to reprint the original version. The text was once again typeset, the printing errors in the first edition were corrected, and a restricted index was added. It is noteworthy that the amendments and improvements (of which more later) made by Muller, Feith, and Fruin in the German edition (1905) were not included in the second Dutch edition of 1920. Seemingly fifteen years later the difference of opinion that existed between Muller and Fruin about revisions led to them being unable to accept even one single amendment. This meant that the 1920 Dutch edition included fewer improvements than the earlier German, Italian, and French editions of the *Manual*! The 1940 American translation is based largely on the 1920 Dutch edition.

By 1938 the second edition had sold out, but a new edition did not appear. The attempts made by various committees were in vain. The *Manual* had grown almost unnoticed, so it also faded from the scene.

## THE *MANUAL* AND ITS CONCEPTS

The pioneering work of the *Manual* lies in defining the archival fonds; in the formulation of the connection between the archive and the functions of those who create it, and in making archivists aware that the boundaries and structure of an archive need to be respected and that the components of which an archive consists can only be comprehended within their

original context.<sup>4</sup> These pioneering concepts can be principally found in sections 1, 2, and 16. Taken separately, these ideas were not really new in 1898, nor innovative. The authors made no claims of having invented them. The principle that archives from different records creators should not be mixed with each other had been formulated and applied much earlier. The insight that it was better not to break up case files because that would be done at the expense of their evidential power had been generally accepted. What was new and innovative was the combination of these ideas, the integrated application of them to historical records. This signified such an advance in archival science that these ideas were able to spread throughout the world.

**Definition of the Object: The Archive.** The *Manual* begins with a careful definition of the object of an inventory, which completely replaces the concept of the “communal historical archive” (see above). As mentioned earlier, Muller had formulated the first definition of “archive” in his 1879 report as city archivist. This formulation, which had followed an extensive exchange of letters with van Riemsdijk and wide-ranging discussions in the meetings of the state archivists and the professional association, would be included in the *Manual* as section 1 without too many amendments. On closer inspection, the discussion between Muller and van Riemsdijk appears to have been about the notion of *records creator*. Is it the community itself that can be considered the owner of the archive, or is it the lord, the monarch, the college, the civil servant, or the trustees who exercise those rights on behalf of the community? Van Riemsdijk was closest to the tried and tested *communal historical archive* concept and can be attributed with the first view; Muller adhered to the last.

The final version of section 1, which speaks of *an administrative body or one of its officers* was a decisive victory for Muller. “The corporate entity itself has no archives, but rather its administrative body and its officials,” he thus decreed in the commentary. “If we were to speak of the ‘*archive of a community*,’

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Horsman, “Taming the Elephant. An Orthodox Approach to the Principle of Provenance,” in K. Abukhanfusa and J. Sydbeck (ed.), *The Principle of Provenance. Report from the First Stockholm Conference on Archival Theory and the Principle of Provenance* (Stockholm: Swedish National Archives, 1994), 51–63.

then we would be using the word 'archive' in an inappropriate meaning: such a so-called archive consists normally of various archives."<sup>5</sup> And thus the *community concept* and therefore the *communal historical archive concept* are surely dismissed.

Muller and van Riemsdijk were ultimately unable to formulate a definition of archive in which family archives would also be included. The one hundred rules are applicable to government archives and to archives established by associations, foundations, and companies, not to private archives, family archives, and personal archives. The authors of the *Manual* have been repeatedly blamed for this conceptual shortcoming.

The object of an inventory is specified in section 4 as the archives of the distinct colleges, the commissions, and the persons who have formed those archives. Most of these fonds belong to the communal historical archive, but they all constitute separate objects for arrangement and description and the creation of an inventory.

The rejection of the *historical archive* concept means that the local principle is also rejected. The archive concept formulated in the *Manual*, in which the administration and not the community creates the archive, ties the archive to the place where the administration is located and not to the place where the community lives. If the rights of one administration pass to another administration and this administration is located in another place, then the archive must be moved to the seat of the new administration. In other words, the reformulation of the term archive led to the reformulation of *Provenienzprinzip* (the principle of provenance). In 1907, Fruin confirmed that while in 1898 *Provenienzprinzip*, which had in the meantime been generally recognized at home and abroad, was interpreted as a "local principle," it was nowadays generally accepted to have this meaning: "that archives of an authority, which has ceased to exist, should be transferred to those, which have succeeded it, regardless of where they were kept." He referred implicitly to section 5 of the *Manual*, which stated that if an administration was abolished and its rights or functions were transferred to another, then the archive, which is the record of those functions,

<sup>5</sup> The translation by Leavitt, page 17, is incorrect.

should also be transferred. Completely unexpectedly Muller turned the definition of the *Provenienzprinzip* a year later (1908) to his own advantage, as being “the method of archive regulations, according to which every document is brought into the archive and into the section of the archive, to which, when the archive was still a living organism, it most recently belonged.” This is, remarkably, not an elaboration of section 5, but of section 17 of the *Manual* (or, if one wishes to be decisive, of the commentary on section 8).<sup>6</sup>

**Arrangement.** Chapter 2, which deals with the arrangement of records, begins with the rule: an archive must be systematically arranged (section 15). This in particular encompasses a ban on arranging records alphabetically according to keyword, or in a chronological order, “independent of their original relationship.” That would entail splitting up files and disturbing the natural relationship of the documents.

Section 16 forbids sorting records in accordance with some artificial classification, which would make the logical relationships between the records indiscernible. Moreover it cannot be applied satisfactorily to an archive that consists for the most part of series of records with the same form of material. Such a classification would necessarily include nine-tenths of the archive in a nondescript category of “General Affairs.”

Section 16 contains the main principle of the *Manual*, this being the rule from which all other rules are derived, as the authors themselves formulated it. An arrangement system has to be used that is based on the original organization of the archive, which in the main corresponds to the organization of the administration that produced it. In other words, a natural (as opposed to an artificial) classification should be used that orders the documents according to their natural relationship.

Rule 15 sealed the fate of the chronological register and the rearrangement of archives according to subject. In connection with section 16 it prescribes a classification system that should be used consistently throughout the entire archive.

Various rules in the *Manual* that relate to the physical

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<sup>6</sup> *Verslagen's Rijks Oude Archieven (VROA)* 1888 [Annual Reports of the State Archives], 2; *VROA* 1907, 793–95; *Archievenblad* 17 (1908/1909): 5.



arrangement within archive repositories of the archives, also serve as guidelines for archivists rectifying the splitting and mixing of archives by their predecessors. We not only find these rules in the chapter on arrangement, but also in the chapters about the formation and layout of archive repositories (sections 8–13) and the composition of the inventory (sections 52–55).

**Respect des Fonds.** The *Manual* does not provide a definition of *respect des fonds*. The definition of the Dutch interpretation, the *herkomstbeginsel* (principle of provenance), only dates from 1908, as we saw earlier. The Dutch did not conceive the idea of *respect des fonds*. There is, of course, a link to the Ecole des Chartes (see page 50) where Muller was lectured to on the *respect des fonds*. The *Manual* in any case goes a step further: not only may archives not be mixed with each other, but the internal structure ought to be respected, too. In that sense the *Manual* fits more closely into the views that were held within the Prussian Privy State Archives and with which the authors were almost certainly familiar.

**Organic Whole.** Section 2 of the *Manual* expresses the view that an archive is an organic whole. It is this idea that is in fact the foundation of the respect for the old order. The archive is created according to particular rules, laws, processes, and idiosyncrasies; these lead to a certain design, structure, and classification. The study of this is necessary for a correct interpretation of the archive and its component parts.

Certainly in the light of the nineteenth century's scientific propositions—in particular Darwinism from the biological perspective and historicism from a historical perspective—section 2 seems to follow naturally from the previous definition of archive. The commentary indeed is argued from section 1. The archive arises as a consequence of the activities of the person who formed it; the commentary even uses the metaphor that was later used so frequently, the “sediment”<sup>7</sup> of the functions.

The core idea is that an archive is not so much an arbitrary collection, but a whole that has arisen organically, originally even a “living organism,” which grows and changes with the organization that creates it. For this reason the original structure

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<sup>7</sup> Leavitt (page 19) translates this as “reflection.”

of an archive must be carefully studied when arranged and described. Sections 16 and 20 elaborate further on this point; the metaphor used there of the series that form the skeleton of the archive fits seamlessly into the organic way of thinking.

The rule of the organic whole is not very fortunate as a separate section, given that it is a logical consequence of the earlier definition and that everything in the commentary has been said before. Muller only rather reluctantly assented at the time to Fruin's proposal for section 2. Later it seems that Fruin, as his lecture notes for the Archive School from the 1920s show, had his regrets: "This section is actually superfluous," he noted. As a statement he felt that the metaphor was given too much emphasis.

The idea behind it is, however, an inseparable component in all the deliberations about the *Manual*. But more or less in imitation of Fruin, later Dutch theorists have also declared the article superfluous. It was precisely through this link to section 16 that confusion arose, certainly when what had been intended as metaphor was turned into an organizational principle. The *Manual* says nothing about this in section 2. The link between the structure of the archive and the structure of the organization that created it is only discussed in section 16—and the link with section 2 is not made.

***The Organization and the Archive.*** The authors themselves considered section 16 to be the most important section. This section explains why the original structure of the archive must be the guiding principle for its arrangement and description. The commentary makes it clear that the *Manual* does not assert that the original order should be retained right down to the smallest detail. In somewhat guarded terms Muller distanced himself from van Riemsdijk's views. Muller's reasoning was that the various tasks of an organization will be allocated to different organizational components and that each of these units can create its own archive, which is part of the greater whole. Whenever two or more units are involved with the same subject or object, then they will each be so from their own field of responsibility. The documents can only be understood from the point of view of the task involved, and therefore they may not be thrown together according to object or subject, but they

should primarily be classified according to organizational unit. Within that, the archivist has thus a greater freedom to change the system used, although this will never be done lightly. Sections 17, 18, and especially 22 revoke much of what is said in the commentary to section 16. Without those following sections, the proposition made in section 16 would not be much more than that which the original *respect des fonds* prescribed: maintain the archive as a whole. Section 16 does not say that the archive *must* be ordered according to the structure of the organization, but rather that the structure of the archive will generally match the structure of the organization. That is an observation, not an instruction.

Section 16 cannot be considered separately from section 20, which states that the series form the skeleton of the archive. Section 20 uses the same language as section 2; even the metaphor is repeated. The new edition of section 20 designed by Muller, Feith, and Fruin for the German translation also explicitly names that relationship: “the statement is a direct consequence of what is elucidated in section 16. After all, if the classification of an archive is based on its old organization, then the issue is in the first place to restore the series, which allow us to become acquainted with the main lines of the construction of the archive.” In section 25 this is, in fact, repeated: first the series have to be restored—these indicate the main lines of the archive, that is to say the organizational components of which they constitute the sediment of the activities. The loose documents can then be grouped around the series to which they functionally belong.

**Description.** Description as a component of the inventory process receives little attention in the *Manual*. The emphasis lies on arrangement. Chapter 3 instructs the archivist when describing records not to use the premises for making calendars. The inventory only needs to serve (section 37) as a signpost;<sup>8</sup> it must provide an outline of the contents of the archive, not of the contents of the documents. When composing calendars (section 73), the intention is, however, to provide an analysis of the contents of the documents.

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<sup>8</sup> Leavitt translates as “guide.”

Chapter 4 on the creation of the inventory starts with the rule (section 50) that the inventory of an archive must, in the main, be set up such that it matches the original organization of the archive. In an inventory the records must be described in their logical relationship. That logical relationship must also be visible in the physical arrangement of the archive, unless the structure of the archive prohibits this. The reverse is expressly forbidden in section 50: the archivist may not follow a method of working whereby he places the records in a logical order, while their descriptions are placed in an order that deviates from this. This prohibition was intended to prevent dissident archivists arranging the archives physically according to the new archiving theory, but continuing to describe it in the form of a chronological register.

The analysis of the relationship between the physical and the logical organization of an archive is thus fully committed to the battle against the chronological register and as a consequence is conceptually weak. The instruction to replace an earlier arrangement based on logic or on the physical form of material by an arrangement based on a natural classification constitutes (as the commentary admits) a major exception to the principle that the old order has to be respected. The general instruction that general principles of logic should be used when drawing up the natural classification, which sections 15 and 16 prescribe, means a total reversal in the practice of arrangement and description. This instruction, disputable when taken as a general rule, has changed the presentation of the inventory in the Netherlands more than any other section.

Chapter 5 deals with the relationship between the inventory of an archive and the general inventory of the repository, the indices of registers (and in particular of resolution registers), the creation of calendars, and the publication of archival documents. A section is devoted to each of these topics, with the exception of the creation of calendars, to which not less than eleven sections are devoted. It starts with section 72, which begins by establishing that it can be desirable, given the exceptional importance of some parts of an archive, to provide calendars of the contents thereof. Those who remember section 39, which drums into the

archivist that when describing an archive the oldest documents are of greater importance than the newer ones, can guess how much importance the editors of the *Manual* still attached to the making of calendars. Muller's own largest project was not the *Manual*, but a documentary publication with the text of all Utrecht records from the sixteenth century on. Fruin produced cartularies of Zeeland archives with such enthusiasm that he created the impression among his peers that he considered the cartularies to be even more important than the description of the documents in the inventory.

Chapter 6, "On the Conventional Use of Certain Terms and Signs," was added, as explained in detail in section 84, because of the great importance of uniformity in inventories. Once again it is remarkable that the majority of the terms defined are solely or partly to do with charters. Not one word is devoted to the description of maps.

### Implementation

Muller, Feith, and Fruin could not dictate what was to be done, and therefore they treated the archivists, who had to apply their rules, with kid gloves. "We do not wish to place a heavy yoke on your shoulders!" they entreated their colleagues on the first page, suggesting that archivists were free to apply the rules or to deviate, provided they would give notice. Nevertheless, it was clear they were not ready to be very flexible. Muller had already declared in 1892 that he would have liked the new method of creating inventories to be made compulsory by the minister. And following the appearance of the first translation, and certainly after the international archive congress in Brussels (1910), Muller and Fruin did their best to make their *Manual* the bible of archival science. Uniformity was the goal and uniformity was enforced—to the advantage of archives management, which cannot be denied.

To start with it took a huge effort to get the new description standard generally applied. Archivists sometimes—and undoubtedly with reason—hid behind the work of their predecessors that they needed to complete, so that they were unable to follow "the most desirable system." Others said that

they were following the new system, but in practice continued in their old habits. And of course there were archivists who saw little of value in the *Manual*. They had always made calendars and they continued to do so.

But uniformity was still achieved and in various ways. VAN played a significant role by making the main goal the adaptation of the one hundred rules and then by actively promoting their dissemination, partly in its meetings and partly in *Archievenblad*. The Archive School was set up, where Fruin, general state archivist in the period 1920 to 1932, taught the subject of archive economics. This consisted of a section-by-section study of the *Manual*. And what was at least as important: the founding fathers of the new method propagated the application of the codified method of arrangement and description actively in their offices and passed that on to the subsequent generation of archivists.

An occupational group with its own association, its own journal, its own education and training, standardization of the professional practice by the occupational group itself, its own jargon, and legally established appointment criteria: these are the most important elements that turn an occupational group into a profession.<sup>9</sup> The publication of the *Manual*, aimed at the standardization of professional practice, must be seen within the context of the professionalization of the archivist. A standard for the arrangement and description of archives was not only "easy for the user," but was an instrument of the new profession through which it could establish its own professional definition of reality, both for its own members as well as its societal environment.

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<sup>9</sup> Theo Thomassen, "Archivists Between Knowledge and Power: On the Independence and Autonomy of Archival Science and the Archival Profession." Paper presented at the 1999 International Archival Conference, "The Destruction and Reconstruction of Historical Memory: Integrity and Autonomy of Archives," Dubrovnik, in *Arhivski Vjesnik* 42 (Zagreb, 1999) 149–67. Also available at [www.archiefschool.nl/docs/thomarch.pdf](http://www.archiefschool.nl/docs/thomarch.pdf).

## AUTHORS' PREFACE

*(To the first edition)*

This is a tedious and meticulous book. The reader is warned.

We considered ourselves in duty bound to state this plainly at the beginning. If criticism deigns to take notice of our writing, it will proclaim it publicly all too soon. We felt it due to ourselves, therefore, to anticipate this by honestly admitting that even in our opinion the narratives of Jacob van Lennep are more entertaining than this work of ours; and by stating, furthermore, that in general we do not make a major issue of the question whether or not a date should be printed in parentheses, or whether documents should be numbered with figures or with letters.

Why then have we thought it necessary to prescribe so carefully and in such detail how we should like to see our archival inventories drawn up? We will gladly explain this.

We are convinced that uniformity in the handling of inventories, both in essentials and in details, is extremely useful. It is convenient for the searcher, who quickly grasps the meaning of any consistent practice, and it prevents much misunderstanding.

One would be greatly mistaken, however, to imagine that we wish now to place the rules of this manual like a heavy yoke on the shoulders of our colleagues. We shall not mind if there are deviations from them in certain details or even in essentials. We merely hope that our colleagues will be willing to consider these rules and that they will not deviate from them without first having given notice, preferably with explanations, in the introductions to their inventories. In this

way we shall progress and in all that is essential attain our goal. The public will know what rules are followed. And we shall know on what points our rules need further consideration and perhaps revision.

We ask of the critics much criticism. Only after mutual exchange of views among the members of our Association will it be possible to reach a definitive result. It is our hope that in a few years a second revised edition of our work may be brought out, for which it would be possible to ask, and perhaps obtain, the approval of the Association.

That second edition will, we trust, be marked to a lesser degree with the imperfection that necessarily attaches to this first attempt. The present text shows the defects of its origin. Each one of us has prepared a part of it, and together we have reviewed the whole. By this revision, mutual contradiction is, we hope, eliminated throughout. But, from the nature of the case, repetition was not always avoidable, as the same observations presented themselves from time to time in other connections where they could not be dispensed with.





S. MULLER Fz.



J. A. FEITH



R. FRUIN TH. AZ.

## CHAPTER I

### THE ORIGIN AND COMPOSITION OF ARCHIVAL DEPOSITORIES

1. *An archival collection<sup>1</sup> is the whole of the written documents, drawings and printed matter, officially received or produced by an administrative body or one of its officials, in so far as these documents were intended to remain in the custody of that body or of that official.*

This definition of an archival collection which we place here at the beginning as the foundation upon which everything must rest had the good fortune to be adopted unanimously both at the meeting of the Association of Archivists<sup>2</sup> and at that of the State Archivists<sup>3</sup>; the Minister of the Interior approved it with slight modifications by a circular of June 10,

<sup>1</sup> The Dutch word is *archieff*, a noun used in the singular, as are related words in various other European languages. It is rendered by the French translators as *fonds d'archives*. As explained in Sect. 2 of this *Manual*, it means an organic whole. As the word "archive", in the singular, has not come into general use in this sense in English, the expression "archival collection" is used in this translation to render the idea of an organic archival whole. "Archive group" is commonly used by English archivists, and particularly by Hilary Jenkinson in his book, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, but "archival collection" is the term in general use in the terminology of The National Archives in Washington. Neither "group" nor "collection" should, of course, here be taken in the sense of things brought together by collectors; the definition itself precludes this.

<sup>2</sup> The Dutch Association of Archivists was founded at Haarlem on June 17, 1891, for the purpose of studying archival problems, and held its first annual meeting on July 9, 1892. As will be seen from this book, the Association was active in the expression of its views on the archival principles and practices set forth herein. It holds its annual meetings in different cities and is engaged in the preparation of a guide to Dutch archives.

<sup>3</sup> The State Archives of the Kingdom of the Netherlands are administered by State Archivists now under the Ministry of Public Instruction, Arts and Sciences, though at the time this *Manual* was written they were under the Ministry of the Interior. Each of the eleven provinces has its State Archives, the General State Archives depository at The Hague, which is situated in South Holland, being also the State Archives depository for that province. The State Archivists meet annually under the chairmanship of the State Archivist General for the discussion of questions affecting Dutch archives.

1897.<sup>4</sup> If, in general, it is difficult to justify a definition, it will probably appear unnecessary to do so in the present case. It is not superfluous, however, to throw some light on the various points, for it is important that the meaning of the definition be clearly understood in all its aspects, since further considerations will naturally emanate from it.

*The Whole.* In the discussion over the definition, it was asked *when* an archival collection could be called a "whole",—and whether this expression was also justified when only a few documents of a collection remained. The answer was made that the archival collection is a "whole" as soon as it ceases to be a "part", i.e., as soon as other parts of the collection are not known to exist elsewhere. If they do exist, it is desirable in one way or another to reconstitute a whole out of these parts. If, however, only a single paper of an archival collection is preserved, that one paper constitutes the collection; it is in itself a whole and must therefore be described by itself.

*Written Documents, Drawings and Printed Matter.* By "drawings" are meant the maps or charts which are frequently found in dossiers, either made by order of administrative bodies or officials, or sent to them for the elucidation of questions to which they relate. There is not the slightest reason to exclude such maps from the archival collection. The same is true of "printed documents", which frequently appear in archival collections, especially since the end of the XVIIth century. The circumstance that a letter of which many copies had to be sent out, or the resolutions of a board (or abstracts of resolutions) intended for the members of a meeting, were printed instead of being written out in sundry copies obviously cannot be a reason for discarding these printed documents from the collection. The definition speaks only of written documents, drawings and printed matter. Other objects can-

<sup>4</sup> The modifications, which concern only the wording, have all been adopted by us, with the exception of the case discussed two pages further on. (D.)

not form part of the archival collection.<sup>5</sup> This applies not only to antiques and similar objects, which by the nature of the case belong to museums or collections of antiquities, but also to seal dies, although the latter are as a rule kept in archival depositories.

*Officially.* Only official documents, i.e., those received or produced by administrative bodies or officials "in their official capacity", belong to the archival collection. Documents received or produced by members of an administrative body or by officials in *another* capacity, which are often found in an archival collection, do not belong to it. Also private letters to officials do not form part of the collection. One should, however, take all this *cum grano salis*. Particularly in small and outlying localities it often happens that the documents received were drawn up in anything but official form, and even all sorts of domestic details are often found in them. Obviously, it would be contrary to the purpose in view that these should be removed from the collection for the sake of maintaining this principle of form.

*Received by an Administrative Body.* The transposition by the Minister of the term "officially", which in the original definition of our Association had stood after the word "officials" (a transposition which in itself was desirable because our text might have given rise to the misconception that the expression "officially" applied only to "officials") called attention to the fact that the words "sent to an administrative body" were not happily chosen. For the sender of a letter to an administrative body need not be acting officially; it is only upon the receipt of the document that it acquires official status. We have, therefore, taken the liberty of changing in the Minister's

<sup>5</sup> The definition was drawn up many years ago, when photographic and other reproductions of documents had not yet come into general use. If written at the present time, these reproductions would no doubt be included. They are certainly not intended to be excluded.

definition, which otherwise was adopted by us, the words "sent to" to "received by".

The question has arisen whether books, for example, sent to an administrative body with an accompanying letter likewise belong to the archival collection of that body. Strictly speaking, that is actually the case: they are enclosures to the covering letter. Yet it seems desirable in this instance to sacrifice theory to practice; it is better to place such books in a library. It may happen that the book presented and the letter accompanying it cannot be separated: e.g., when the donor's dedication is written in the front of the book. Even then it seems preferable not to separate the book, on account of this dedication, from its natural depository, the library, for which it was certainly intended by the giver.

*Produced by an Administrative Body.* This expression was chosen instead of the one originally proposed—"emanating from the administrative body"—because otherwise it might appear doubtful, for example, whether the minutes of the body were included under the definition.

*An Administrative Body.* Under administrative bodies, as appears from the discussions which took place at the meeting of State Archivists, must also be included judicial boards, which in the old sense certainly belonged to administrative boards, although in the language of today they should perhaps not be included with them. An administrative authority composed of a single person (a ruling count, for example) is of course also included under this expression. Our Association's definition did not speak of "an administrative body", but of "the administrative body of a corporate entity". This expression was chosen in order to conform to the terminology always used by the State Archivist General. Now, however, since the Minister has not inserted the term "corporate entity" in the definition imposed on the State Archivists, we likewise have omitted it, all the more because it seems to us to be somewhat

vague and likely to lead to misunderstanding without special explanation.

*One of its Officials.* Our Association's definition speaks of "one of its functionaries", i.e., functionaries of the corporate entity. Now that this last term is removed from the definition, this expression must naturally be altered. Furthermore, as the Minister appears to prefer the word "officials" to the word "functionaries", we see no reason not to conform to this. All officials do not create an independent archival collection; this question will be dealt with further on (see Sect. 55).

*An Administrative Body or One of its Officials.* It will be noticed that the administrative body and its officials are mentioned here, and not the corporate entity which is administered by them. The corporate entity itself has no archives, but rather its administrative body and officials. Therefore, in speaking of "the archival collection of a corporate entity", we should be using the term "archival collection" in a metaphorical sense: such a so-called "archival collection" in fact usually consists of several collections. Likewise, the State itself has no archival collection, and the term "State Archives" is therefore in reality incorrect: there exist only the archives of the various Ministries, of the two Chambers of the States-General, etc. (We are not speaking here of the ownership of the archives: in that respect the term "State Archives" is of course correct, since the whole body of the archives of the Ministries, of the Chambers, etc., belongs to the State.)

*In so far as these Documents were Intended to Remain in the Custody of that Body or of that Official.* In two respects the Minister's definition here deviates from that of our Association and in both we consider the deviation an improvement. Our definition said: "in so far as the documents are intended"; it is clear that "were intended" is more correct, because transfers of a document by later custodians cannot take away from it its archival character. The replacement of the words "in the custody of the corporate entity" by the expression "in the

custody of that body or of that official" is in conformity with the omission of the term "corporate entity" from the definition and is also more accurate. By the limitation contained in the clause quoted above, it is shown in the first place that the drafts<sup>6</sup> of letters written by an administrative body belong to its archival collection, but not the engrossed copies sent out, which belong to the archives of the addressee. Furthermore, other documents are excluded by this limitation, e.g., packages of printed ordinances or printed notices and other material which, although intended to be posted or circulated, were left over in the archival depositories. If a set of ordinances was bound for the use of the administrative body, this of course is not excluded; for it was clearly intended that it should remain deposited with that body.

A distinction has sometimes been made between an archival collection and a library, by saying that the former contains all the manuscripts which belong to an administrative body *jure publico*, the latter all those which belong to it *jure privato*. This definition, however, is incorrect; in fact, the title deeds of houses bought by a municipality to be converted later to public use and the documents concerning the income from houses inherited by it from secularized monasteries belong without question to the archives of the municipality, although the latter possesses the houses and the income *jure privato*. But there is still another objection to this definition. Some years ago Wackernagel defined an archival collection as follows: "The archival collection is the aggregate of those documents which were produced in the course of and for purposes of public administration, as well as those which were produced in the course of private administration but which by transfer of the latter to the State subsequently acquired a public character." This definition, correct for State archives, is decidedly incorrect as a general definition of an archival collection; for it is unquestionable that private civil bodies also form archival collections (see Sect. 3).

<sup>6</sup> Or modern carbon copies.

## 2. *An archival collection is an organic whole.*

In the preceding section it has been shown how an archival collection comes into being as the result of the activities of an administrative body or of an official, and how it is always the reflection of the functions of that body or of that official. An archival collection therefore is not arbitrarily created in the way that historical manuscripts are accumulated, although such an accumulation, e.g., the Military History Collection,<sup>7</sup> is sometimes called an archival collection. On the contrary, an archival collection is an organic whole, a living organism,<sup>8</sup> which grows, takes shape, and undergoes changes in accordance with fixed rules. If the functions of the body change, the nature of the archival collection changes likewise. The rules which govern the composition, the arrangement and the formation of an archival collection, therefore, cannot be fixed by the archivist in advance; he can only study the organism and ascertain the rules under which it was formed. Every archival collection has, therefore, as it were, its own personality, its individuality, which the archivist must become acquainted with before he can proceed to its arrangement. Consequently, in the rules which follow there is careful avoidance of giving any scheme for archival arrangement and grouping. Every archival collection, be it understood first of all, must be treated in its own way, and this manual has no other purpose than to suggest the means of becoming acquainted with the structure of a collection and of deriving from what is learned about it the principles for its arrangement. Without previous examination of the structure of the organism, this work cannot be satisfactorily accomplished. It is not the first "systematizer" that one meets—and still less the first historian—who is competent to

<sup>7</sup> The Dutch archivists have in mind here the copies of documents relating to military history which the Minister of War commissioned Colonel de Bas, with the aid of a few other officers, to make in various archival depositories in 1891 and which are all brought together in the Archives of the General Staff at The Hague. (F.)

<sup>8</sup> At least an organism which has lived, for the archivist generally receives the archival collection into his custody when it is dead, or at any rate only the parts of it which must be considered as closed. (D.)



arrange the archival collection, but only one who has studied its organization.

3. *The administrative offices or officials of private civil bodies may also produce an archival collection.*

There exist private civil bodies, such as monasteries, hospitals, fraternities, etc., and in our day societies and associations such as, for example, the Company for the Exploitation of State Railways, the Netherlands Society for the Advancement of Industry, the Zuiderzee Association, the Society of Nassau-La Lecq, whose administrative offices or officials make contracts, receive letters, keep minutes, etc., all by virtue of their functions, and which in this respect may therefore be placed on the same footing as public civil bodies. Even private individuals may have archives. A merchant, as well as a business partnership or company, possesses an archival collection consisting of journals, cash books, letters received, copies of letters sent, etc.

One should not class with the above, however, so-called family archives. These, in fact, are generally a conglomeration of papers and documents which the various members of a family or the various occupants of a house or feudal castle, either as private individuals or in various capacities, sometimes even as collectors of curiosities, have received and preserved. The documents in a family archival collection do not form "a whole"; very often they have been gathered together in the strangest manner and lack the organic bond of an archival collection in the sense attached to it in this manual. The rules for ordinary archival collections, therefore, cannot be applied to family archives.<sup>9</sup>

4. *A sharp distinction should be made between an archival collection and the contents of an archival depository as a whole. In an archival depository one*

<sup>9</sup> An exception, however, must be made for the archives of princely families. (Note by Mr. Hans Kaiser). (F.)

*may find six kinds of archives: (1) the archival collection of the administrative body to which the depository belongs; (2) the archives of committees or officials subordinate to that body; (3) the archives of boards and persons whose rights or functions have passed to that body; (4) the archives of boards and persons over whom that body has to exercise supervision and whose collections have been placed by it in its depository; (5) archives which have been placed in the depository by virtue of an administrative measure; (6) archives which have been received as a loan, by gift or by purchase.*

In explanation of this section heading, it may be useful to add merely: (1) that under "boards and persons" must also be included, here and elsewhere, the administrative bodies of religious, educational and charitable foundations; (2) that by "administrative measure" are meant laws and decrees as well as special government regulations (cf. Sect. 7).

By way of illustration, it is perhaps desirable to give an example of each of the six kinds of archives mentioned. Let us suppose that the depository belongs to a municipality: then one would have in mind, for example, under (2) the archives of the chamber of finance and of the treasurer; under (3) the archives of monasteries and the district population registers; under (4) the archives of asylums over which the burgomaster has supervision; under (5) the archival collection of the local court of *schepens*<sup>10</sup> deposited with the municipality by the State; under (6) the archives of churches and charitable institutions.

It is possible that one of the archival collections placed in a depository itself previously constituted the entire contents of a depository; in other words, that this collection, at the time when it was still independent, was composed of more or less

<sup>10</sup> An old local court in the Netherlands, whose members were called *schepens*.

independent archives, or that other archival collections were deposited in it. This is true, for example, of the archival collection of the ancient diocese of Utrecht deposited in the State Archives at Utrecht, which contains the archives of several administrative boards, and in which are deposited, among others, the archival collections of many polder district boards.<sup>11</sup> Such an archival collection no longer constitutes the entire contents of an archival depository, but naturally there still remains a certain connection between its various component parts. To what extent it is permissible to separate such archival collections completely from the main collection in which they are deposited is discussed in Sect. 13.

The various categories of archives enumerated above must be arranged independently; rules will be found further on (see Sect. 70) with regard to the description of some of them in a single inventory.

In almost every archival depository there will be found, besides the six kinds of archives mentioned above, private manuscripts. These are, however, not archival documents and they are therefore not included under the various categories. In general, it is desirable to remove these documents from the archival collection (see Sect. 66).

*5. To the archival collection of an administrative body (whether a board or a person) in a depository there should be added the archives of the bodies (boards or persons) whose rights or functions have been transferred to it.*

Just as an archival collection is an organic whole, so also an archival depository is a product historically formed. The fact that distinct archival collections are brought together in a single depository is not the result of chance, but the conse-

<sup>11</sup> Polders are areas of land reclaimed from the sea or from other bodies of water. They are placed under the supervisory control of polder district boards.

quence of the vicissitudes of the organizations to which they belong. The above-mentioned rule, which is now prescribed by the government for the arrangement of State archives, is consequently based upon what experience teaches as to the way in which depositories are formed.

When an administrative body is abolished and its rights or functions pass to another, the archival collection, which is the reflection of those functions or rights, goes with it. It has always been so. When a great many religious foundations were secularized at the time of the disturbances,<sup>12</sup> the States,<sup>13</sup> to which the rights of those foundations passed, took possession as far as possible of their archives;<sup>14</sup> the collection of the abbey of Egmond, which was seized by the States of Holland, was transferred to The Hague; that of the abbey of Middelburg was seized by the States of Zeeland, which had taken possession of the abbey itself. Other foundations fell into the hands of the cities in which they were situated, and their archives met with the same fate. The government acted in the same way also in times of later expansion. When the States of Utrecht bought the viscounty of Montfoort (1649), they acquired its archival collection at the same time. The same thing happened in 1795, when everywhere the Assemblies of the provincial States were replaced by Assemblies of Representatives; the latter took over the archives of the States with-

<sup>12</sup> The revolt of the Low Countries against Spain from the middle of the 16th century to 1648.

<sup>13</sup> The States, or Estates, were the provincial assemblies. Before 1576, they were composed of three members representing respectively the clergy, the nobility and the cities, i.e., the burghers, or "third estate". After the revolt against Spain, the clergy was no longer represented, except in the province of Utrecht, where the five Chapters, then Protestant, continued to send delegates to the assembly. The influence of the cities, which had the money, far outweighed that of the nobility; the number of cities represented and their manner of voting varied in the different provinces.

See also pages 26 and 27.

<sup>14</sup> The fact that the churchmen themselves tried to keep the archives of their institutions out of the hands of the States was a direct consequence of their not recognizing secularization and the transfer of the rights of the institution to the State. (D.)

out more ado. In the same way, the archival collection of the Council of the Nassau domains was the depository in which were placed the archives of the seigniories acquired through the Princes of Orange. The same rule is followed in cities and in rural communities. The fact that these places are still in possession of the archives of the city governments in existence prior to 1795 and of the various administrative bodies which followed successively during the period of French domination is an application of the above-mentioned rule; the present municipal administrative bodies are the legal heirs of those earlier local administrations and are, consequently, in possession of their archives. And when it happens even at the present time that two communities are combined into one, the archival collections of the former communities are transferred to the archival depository of the new community which replaces them.

Experience teaches, therefore, that if the functions or rights of one administrative body pass to another, the archives accompany them. There are good reasons for this being so: the body which continues the functions of its predecessor and which exercises its rights needs for the proper performance of these activities to be acquainted with the earlier data contained in the archival collection. It has the same need of the archives of the preceding body as the latter would have had if it had continued to exist. The above-mentioned rule derived from experience is therefore perfectly logical.

The wording of the section-heading requires some explanation. Along with "functions" it also mentions "rights", because one can hardly say that the functions of ecclesiastical foundations which have been secularized have passed to the new owners of the former ecclesiastical properties; only the rights pertaining to the properties have been transmitted; the functions have ceased to exist. It should be noted, however, that all rights involve functions, which are related to the exercise of those rights; these functions also pass to the new

owners of the properties. Thus, for example, the auditing of the accounts of the ecclesiastical properties and the disposal of the credit balance are functions which have passed from the former owners of those properties to the States or cities.

The word "added" in the section-heading might give rise to a misunderstanding; it is desirable, therefore, to point out clearly here that it is not meant that the archives brought together in a depository should be amalgamated into a single archival collection. On the contrary, each collection should be kept separate, but the separate collections are gathered into one depository. It is useful to observe at this point that it sometimes happens that new administrators of an archival collection continue to enter in the registers already used by the preceding administrative body the official documents that result from the functions transferred from that body to its successor; for example, the investitures of the fiefs of the abbey of St. Paul after the annexation of those fiefs by the States of Utrecht were registered in the same book in which are found the earlier investitures. In many of the municipal archival collections one also finds recorded in the same register the minutes of proceedings of the various local administrative bodies which succeeded one another during the French period.<sup>15</sup>

It frequently happens that the rights or functions of one body or person, upon the abolition of that authority, are divided among several bodies or persons; how the archival collection should be treated in that case is not stated in this section, which deals exclusively with the transfer of *archival collections*, not of *parts of collections*; on this subject see Sect. 10.

6. *The archival collections of administrative bodies (whether boards or persons) whose rights, after 1798, passed to the State should be placed in the State*

<sup>15</sup> In such a case, the register should be mentioned, if necessary by a cross-reference, in the description of the archives of both administrative bodies. (D.)

*depository at the capital of the province within whose present territory the body in question formerly functioned.*<sup>16</sup>

There have always been deviations from the rules set forth in the preceding section, to the extent that, when the rights or functions passing from one board or person to another were of wide scope and consequently involved an extensive administration, the body which took over these functions created a separate organization for them; in that case, the archival collection also was transferred to the depository of that new organization. When, for example, Charles V acquired Gelderland (1544), the manorial administration remained in force in the province and retained the archival collection; similarly, the archives of the Netherlands manors acquired by the Counts of Nassau were not transported to Germany, but a separate administrative board which had its own archival depository was set up for the Netherlands properties in the Council of the Nassau domains; similarly also, the archives of Charles V as King of Spain, as Count of Holland, and as Duke of Gelder were not all brought together in one depository. This is after all not really in conflict with the principle stated in the preceding section. The various rights in question here were indeed combined in a single person, but it was an accumulation of various authorities in one person rather than a transfer of rights from one authority to another.

The modern State first brought a change in this matter. In 1798, provincial sovereignty was abolished and the rights emanating from that sovereignty passed to the State. When, therefore, the State allowed the provincial depositories (except for South Holland<sup>17</sup>) to continue to exist after that date, this was indeed a distinct departure from the principle expressed

<sup>16</sup> This body may have been a former local board or official whose jurisdiction did not extend over the entire area of the present province.

<sup>17</sup> See note 3 on page 13.

in the preceding section. When the provinces lost their independence, they were incorporated in the Netherlands State (whereas after the union under Charles V they had remained independent); the departmental administrative bodies did not become the heirs of the provincial States, as in 1581 the States had been the heirs of the provincial lord, but the government of the Netherlands State or rather of the one and indivisible Batavian Republic became the heir of all the provincial States.

Furthermore, this departure from the old rule had good justification. For while the sovereign rights of the old provincial States and their archives with them were transferred to the State, their functions passed in large part to the Intermediate authorities and later to the departmental and provincial administrative bodies. It goes without saying that these bodies in their work, especially in the years immediately following 1798, could not possibly do without the archives of their predecessors; it was, therefore, absolutely necessary that those archives be left in their old places. This is so true that one might make it a general rule that when the rights of a body have passed to one authority and its functions to another the archival collection should be placed with the latter, which as a rule will have more use for it.

What rules should now be followed in the distribution of the archives acquired by the State after 1798 among the depositories in the eleven provinces? It is obvious that it is natural and fitting to place in each depository the archives of the bodies which functioned in those provinces, in so far as they have successively passed to the State since 1798.

But should one take as the basis for this distribution the boundaries of the present province or those of the old one? For accepting the old boundaries there is the argument that the contents of the archival depository will then correspond to the acquisitions received later, so that, for example, it will be possible to follow completely in a single depository the history of a polder district board which belonged to the province be-



fore 1798, but not after that date, and which was abolished in 1810; this can be done both in the State archival collection and in that of the polder district itself, placed in the same depository. But on the other hand numerous insurmountable objections arise: (1) The provinces have changed their boundaries so often since 1798 that it would sometimes be difficult to decide which ones should be accepted, and in no case would one arrive at the desired conclusion. For example, in the above-mentioned case of a polder district which in 1798 passed to another province, one would still, in tracing its history in the period after 1798, have to consult the archival collection of the provincial administrative body under whose jurisdiction it belonged after that date. (2) In depositing archival collections after 1798, the provincial boundaries existing at the time are regularly followed; if one were to depart from this principle, innumerable transfers of archives from one depository to another would be necessary. (3) The present division into provinces is the only one which embraces our whole country. In the division previous to 1795, it would be necessary to determine in which depository one must include Dutch Flanders, Westerwolde, the counties and manors of Buren, Leerdam, Kuilenburg, IJsselstein, Vianen and Ameland, the lands incorporated in 1801, such as Ravestein, etc., and the districts acquired in 1807, such as Huizen and Zevenaar. As for Limburg, it would be necessary in any case to adopt the present division. (4) The adoption of the old boundaries would always make it necessary for anyone in search of an archival collection to be acquainted with those old boundaries.

All these reasons seem to make it desirable to adopt the present boundaries of the provinces as the basis for the distribution. And, taking everything into consideration, by so doing no conflict is created between the boundaries adopted for archival depositories before 1798 and for those after 1798. The State places in its provincial depositories the archival collections of all the administrative bodies established within

the present boundaries, and particularly that of the old provincial government. Each of these archival collections has its own rules of long standing, under which it has grown, and its own boundaries; it has absorbed the archives of the administrative bodies of other corporate entities, which sometimes are situated even outside of those boundaries.<sup>18</sup> These rules must of course be respected; the archival collections deposited in earlier times each form in themselves an inviolable whole. But it is no less obvious that these rules cannot and should not be binding for the State depository, which was not created until after 1798 and which in its formation can and must set up its own rules.

The wording of the section-heading needs only a slight elucidation. It is there stated that the archival collection of an administrative body abolished after 1798 should be placed in the depository of the province in which that body *functioned*. This last word was chosen because it happens occasionally that a body which functioned in one province was established in another (the Council of Brabant, for example, functioned principally in North Brabant, but was established at 's-Gravenhage.<sup>19</sup>) The aim has been to bring out clearly that the established seat in such a case is immaterial. Furthermore, in contrast to the thesis laid down in Sect. 5, here it is a question only of *rights* which have passed to the State; in fact, the functions are not exercised by the State, but by an administrative body or by an official of the State.

*7. The depository of the old State archives in a province (as also a depository of municipal archives) is composed of: (1) the archives of former provincial and departmental (or municipal) administrative bodies; (2)*

<sup>18</sup> In other words, each one of the archival collections placed in the provincial depository may itself, before having been placed there, have already grown to be an archival depository. (D.)

<sup>19</sup> The Hague.

*those of the present provincial (or municipal) administrative body, in so far as they have been transferred to it; (3) those of the administrative bodies (boards or persons) whose rights or functions passed to the former provincial or departmental (or municipal) bodies; (4) those of the boards or persons formerly functioning in the present territory of the province (or municipality) which have been placed in the depository by an administrative measure.*

After what has been set forth in the two preceding sections, the above paragraph, which is now accepted by the Government in so far as it concerns the State depositories in the provinces, needs but little explanation, since its principal object is merely to draw for provincial and municipal depositories the conclusions which naturally follow from the two preceding sections.

As was pointed out in the explanation of Sect. 5, departmental and provincial administrative bodies after 1798 remained in possession of the archival collections of the States and the Representatives<sup>20</sup> who had preceded them. These archives form the fundamental part of the State depositories in the provinces,<sup>21</sup> and will continue to do so, even if later other local archives are added to them.

An archival depository in a province is composed primarily of the archival collection of the provincial administration, including both the earlier sovereign power and the later purely administrative body. It is not always possible to draw a sharp line between these two. The Intermediate administrative bodies appearing in 1798 were composed of the same persons who, before the proclamation of national unity, had made up the provincial administrative body, and there is therefore noth-

<sup>20</sup> See page 23.

<sup>21</sup> What is said here about depositories in the provinces applies also to the General State Archives in the case of the province of South Holland. (D.)

ing surprising in the fact that in some provinces the records of the new administration were continued in the registers of the old. The boards subordinate to the provincial administrative body were maintained in their entirety by the purely theoretical decision of January 1798. Furthermore, in 1798, provincial sovereignty no longer existed except in name; already, from the day in 1796 when the States-General were replaced by the National Assembly, the provincial administrative bodies were excluded from the central administration. The year 1813 is today accepted as the dividing line between the old and the modern provincial archives. The section-heading, however, is so worded by the insertion of number 2 that the provincial archival collection after 1813 also falls under its application if (as is the case in North Brabant) it has been transferred to the State depository.

In the third place, a provincial depository contains the archives of the boards or persons whose rights or functions have passed to the provincial or departmental administrative bodies. This is a direct application of the principle laid down in Sect. 5 and therefore does not require any explanation.

By the archives mentioned under number 4, those of boards and persons in the present territory of the province which have been placed in the depository by an administrative measure, are meant principally the archival collections dealt with in the preceding section, i.e., those of administrative bodies whose rights passed to the State after 1798. It should be noted, furthermore, that the dividing lines indicated in the preceding section for the depositing of archival collections are likewise applicable when the archives of administrative boards or officials of the State itself are transferred to provincial depositories, whether because those boards have been abolished or because their ancient and their modern archives are being separated. All archives coming into the possession of the State which are located in the provincial depositories should be distributed among those depositories according to the

present boundaries of the provinces. The State, in fact, has followed this rule; not only are the judicial archives divided among the provincial depositories according to their present boundaries, but those boundaries are also taken into account with other deposits. Thus the archives of the Utrecht Chapters<sup>22</sup> are placed in the depository in Utrecht and not in the General State Archives. Also, the Orphans' Court archives which were not claimed by the municipal administrative bodies in 1879 are kept in the depositories of the provinces within whose boundaries the municipalities concerned are situated. For the meaning of the expression "administrative measure", see the comments in Sect. 4.

All that was said at the beginning of the present section in regard to provincial depositories likewise applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to municipal depositories. Here also the principal contents consist of the archives of the municipal administrative bodies which have succeeded one another and whose functions have passed to the present municipal administration. In addition, these depositories also contain the archives of the bodies (e.g., disestablished ecclesiastical foundations or manors) whose rights or functions have passed to the municipal administration. The fourth category (that of deposited archives) does not always appear. When, however, the State places the old judicial archives in the custody of a municipality, the present municipal boundaries are in that case taken as guide; thus, to the judicial archival collection turned over on loan to the municipality of Utrecht belong also the archives of the courts which functioned in the "liberty" of the city,<sup>23</sup> because the present municipality includes also within its limits the ancient "liberty".<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> The Cathedral Chapter and four collegiate chapters.

<sup>23</sup> "Liberty" in the sense of territory over which the city had jurisdiction, but which lay outside its medieval walls.

<sup>24</sup> In France it is entirely by way of exception that certain municipalities have been authorized to keep the judicial archives, all of which ought to be collected in the departmental depositories. One of these exceptions occurs at

Except in provincial and municipal depositories, one will but seldom find collected in a single depository the various categories of archives enumerated in the definition; that is why there is no mention of any other categories in this section. This, however, does not prevent the archival depositories, for example, of rural communities which have been formed by the union of several villages from containing the archives of various village administrative bodies, nor does it prevent the archival remains of the disestablished Walloon churches from being kept with the archives of the Dutch churches to which their rights have passed. Thus it is that before the introduction of the Provincial ecclesiastical administration (1816) the archives of the four "classes"<sup>25</sup> of Zeeland were deposited, by virtue of a decision of those four "classes", in the archival collection of the "classis" of Walcheren.

*8. The various archival collections placed in a depository must be kept carefully separate. If there are several copies of a document, a study should be made to see in which collection each copy belongs.*

There are archival depositories in which all documents, regardless of their origin, are arranged in chronological order. There are others where all documents received by various administrative bodies or officials are assembled in packets or series according to the branch of the government service to which they relate. For example, all the documents concerning relief to the poor or military affairs have been combined

Sens, where the judicial archives of the entire ancient bailiwick of which Sens was the capital are found. In Belgium it has happened quite frequently that the State has given as a loan to the large cities with an organized archival administration their ancient judicial archives. It has even happened, only once it is true, that the State has given up those archives in full ownership to a city, Louvain, in exchange for the archives of the ancient university and certain others which had been preserved until then in the city hall. (F.)

<sup>25</sup> The plural of "classis", used in the Dutch Reformed Church to mean an ecclesiastical body, composed of ministers and ruling elders, ranking between the consistory and the synod; also, the district represented by such a body.

into one whole, irrespective of whether they belong to the archival collection of the province, to that of a city, or to that of one of the monasteries. The *respect des fonds*<sup>26</sup> has here not been taken into account. It is extremely desirable in such a case to restore each document or charter to the archival collection of the administrative body or official to whom it originally belonged.

All sorts of aids may point out the way to the archivist in this, particularly old archival inventories. One need not, of course, follow the system of the old inventory; it should be used only as a list of indications as to what documents belonged to the archival collection at the time when that inventory was drawn up. Still other means are sometimes at the disposal of the archivist, such as the property registers of a corporation, and accounts in which the items for the receipt of interest and rent may throw light on the property and rights of an administrative body, while the items of expenditure give information about the persons and things with which that body was connected. For the archives of monasteries, the cartularies may be excellent guides. Thus, in the archival collection of the abbey of Middelburg there is found a register indicating the benefices which it was in the abbot's power to bestow.

Finally, the documents themselves may sometimes indicate clearly by external marks to what collection they have belonged. These external marks, in most cases annotations on the back, are indeed generally very brief but very significant. Thus, for example, documents from the archival collection of

<sup>26</sup> *Respect des fonds*. This expression, which figures so prominently in the discussion of the handling of archives, means the maintenance of the integrity of archival collections. From the discussion in this first chapter of the *Manual*, it seems clear that the *fonds* or collection of a large administrative body, e.g., a department of our government, may contain a number of *fonds* or collections of smaller constituent units such as bureaus, divisions, or committees. In Chapter II, the authors show that their conception of "*respect des fonds*" does not preclude under certain circumstances modifications in the arrangement of documents within an archival collection (see Sects. 16 (end), 17 and 18).

the monastery of Selwerd (Groningen) scattered among a number of private collections were restored to the original monastery collection, as it was found upon examination that all documents of that monastery bore the same annotation "*uut des convents kiste*" (from the chest of the convent) on the back. The archival collection of the Carthusian monastery and that of the monastery of the Regular Friars of Utrecht were brought together again by means of the numbers placed on them obviously by the same hand.<sup>27</sup> When two or more originals of the same document exist in an archival depository, the above-mentioned and other similar indications may often determine in which collection each document should be placed.

9. *If it is not evident from old inventories, external marks, or other means to what archival collection a formal instrument<sup>28</sup> or other archival document belongs, the contents of the document must determine this. If it appears from the contents that the document may have belonged to any one of two or more collections, it should be placed in one of them with a cross reference in the others.*

Contracts may, from the evidence of their contents, have belonged to the archives of the contracting parties (two or more) or of their assigns. Often it is even stated in contracts that two, three, or more identical copies have been drawn up and delivered to some of the parties named in the contract

<sup>27</sup> The French translation contains at this point additional examples from the Belgian and French archives.

<sup>28</sup> The Dutch word *oorkonde* (Ger. *Urkunde*) appears many times throughout this book. The characteristic feature of an *oorkonde* lies in its form. It is an authentic declaration, made either by a private body or person before witnesses, or by a public authority, in which case witnesses are unnecessary. The word is therefore translated in this book by "formal document", "authenticated instrument", "charter", etc., or occasionally by "document" alone, when the context leaves no doubt as to its authentic character.

For the distinction between an *oorkonde* and a charter, see Sects. 92 and 93.



or to other persons or bodies mentioned by name. What has just been said in regard to contracts naturally applies also, *mutatis mutandis*, to other archival documents such as accounts, etc., which, as shown by their contents, were drawn up in several copies. An archivist should check the archival collections brought together in his depository and then should place the original or originals in the collection or collections of the administrative body or official named in the contract or of their assigns. He should never place two originals in the same collection, unless there are very peremptory and conclusive reasons for doing so. Since one original cannot be in two or more collections at the same time the cross reference will serve to make known that there is an original which may possibly have formed part of the collection. A cross reference represents, so to speak, the original and should for that reason be clearly distinguished from a copy.

10. *When an archival collection is complete, it should not be distributed among two or more archival depositories.*

One can hardly state strongly enough that the dismemberment of archival collections is wrong, both from the scientific and practical points of view. The various documents of an archival collection throw light upon one another. Thus the resolutions and correspondence of a board are just as instructive as the accounts and receipts for acquainting us with the administration of a property and with its history. The dismemberment of an archival collection therefore makes the complete study of the history of a property impossible; for even if it is generally possible to separate the accounts and receipts of various offices according to their spheres of activity, the resolutions and correspondence of the board cannot be split up and therefore cannot be divided among the offices. Even a chronological division is questionable; but division by

a system presents, for the reasons indicated above, still greater dangers. It is, therefore, clear that the distribution of an archival collection among different depositories must be strictly avoided.<sup>29</sup>

The division of the old and the new archives of the same board between two depositories is a different matter. Both depositories belong in fact to the same owner, in whose name they are administered, generally in the same city; there is no real dismemberment here, but only an administrative change introduced for purely practical reasons.<sup>30</sup> And yet, even here, the separation presents disadvantages; that is why we propose elsewhere (Sect. 14) to adopt fixed rules for it, in order as far as possible to avert the danger of the removal of part of the archival collection of a board unless there is reason for it owing to a change in the organization or the authority of the board.

In the case of the archival collection of the administrative board of a corporate body which still exists, it may sometimes be absolutely necessary on account of changes in the functions of such boards to hand over archival documents to those who exercise these functions at the present time and who may need the documents for carrying on their work. One should, however, in such a case always mention in the inventory that these documents also belong to the archival collection, but that for

<sup>29</sup> It is very regrettable, for example, to see the ancient archival collection of the principality of Montbéliard divided arbitrarily into three parts, one at Vesoul, another at Colmar, and the principal one in Paris. In Belgium, the same situation exists with most of the ecclesiastical collections, which are preserved partly in the State Archives and partly in religious establishments or in diocesan Archives. This arises from the fact that at the time of the Revolution religious establishments, instead of handing over all their archives to the State, kept a more or less considerable part of them in their own possession. (F.)

<sup>30</sup> In certain cities in France (Mézières and Tours among others) the old communal archives are placed for greater security with the archives of the Prefecture in the keeping of the departmental archivist; the modern municipal archives are kept at the City Hall at the disposal of the municipal administration. This is also the case at Liège (Belgium), where the municipal administration has deposited all its ancient records in the State Archives. (F.)

reasons of a practical nature they have been relinquished to the new possessors of the functions.

With the administrative board of a corporate body which is dead, this necessity no longer exists. Precisely at the time of the death, or dissolution, of the corporate body, when its administrative functions pass in part to the administrative boards of other corporate bodies, the temptation may be great to break up the archival collection accordingly. Thus, for example, in 1811, upon the dissolution of the Cathedral Chapter of Utrecht, various documents from its archival collection relating to its properties were sent to the public land offices which were to administer them thereafter. For the reasons stated above, this step is questionable. Furthermore, it was unnecessary; in fact, the archival collection of the Cathedral, at the time of its disestablishment, was placed in an archival depository under the direction of an archivist who was given the power and duty of sending to the public land offices the information and the transcripts that they needed. The course followed with the archival collection of the Cathedral Chapter will almost always be adopted also with the archives of other dissolved corporate bodies; in fact, such collections are now always sent to archival depositories administered, as a rule, by trained archivists.

*11. It is desirable, when it can be done without excessive difficulty, to reassemble archival collections which have been split up.*

More than once it has happened (see the explanation at the end of Sect. 5) that the rights and functions of a board or of a person have passed to several boards or persons. The question is what is to be done in such a case with the archival collection of the abolished administrative body. Should it be split up or should it be transferred to the archival depository of the body to which most of the rights or most of the func-

tions have passed? If one consults the general practice, it is seen that the question has been answered in various ways.

When, for example, as a result of the revolt against Spain, the bond which had united Holland and Zeeland under the rule of a count was almost completely broken, the administrative bodies and officials in Holland remained at first in possession of the common archives of both and restored them only in part; but Zeeland succeeded, after a few years, in obtaining the ancient accounts relating to Zeeland which were lying in the former Chamber of Accounts of Holland and Zeeland.

When the duchy of Upper Gelderland was dismembered by the Peace of Utrecht, its archival collection was kept intact, but each of the successors acquired the right of consulting it. When in 1798 the rights and functions of the earlier sovereign provincial administrative bodies passed partly to the State and partly to the departmental administrative bodies, the archives remained with the latter. When in 1811 the village courts were abolished and their functions transferred partly to the mayor and the municipal council and partly to the newly established law courts and the recorders of mortgages, the archives also were divided between those bodies and officials.

The difficulty in answering this question lies in the fact that two different principles are here in conflict: one of these being that archives are the remains and therefore also a continuation of certain functions and rights, so that the splitting up of the latter must also bring about the division of the former, and the other that an archival collection is an organic whole which cannot be torn apart. In general, this latter principle ought to prevail, and if such a case should arise today, certainly no one would wish that the archival collection be broken up (see the preceding section). It should be deposited with one of the successors and made available for consultation by all. If this was not always formerly done, it must be attributed principally to two causes which today have

disappeared. For one thing, the much more laborious means of communication in those days made it extremely difficult to consult archives located elsewhere; one broke up the archival collection and kept for himself the documents that he expected to need, rather than undertake a distant journey to another depository each time they had to be consulted. Furthermore, the two parties who jointly had become the successors of the board that was abolished did not trust each other; they feared that the one which held the common archival collection would make difficulties in granting the other party access to it under all circumstances. Where it is now definitely established that precisely these difficulties at the time led to the splitting up of the collection, there is no reason to prolong further this inherently objectionable state of things; it is recommended that the separated parts be reunited, all the more since all provincial depositories now have the same proprietor, namely the State, and since each depository is, moreover, placed under the direction of an archivist who is qualified and whose duty it is to give information to others.

Meanwhile, insurmountable difficulties may stand in the way of these measures. Suppose, for example, that the archival collection of Upper Gelderland had been divided among the various heirs in 1715; it would be difficult indeed to restore the archives at the present time, since the various parts of the collection would now belong to different owners (Netherlands and Prussia). Another possibility is that a part of the divided archival collection may have taken root in the depository where it has been lying perhaps for centuries. Thus, it would certainly be desirable in itself that the archives of the ancient village courts disrupted in 1811 should be brought together under a single control and in a single depository; but there would, nevertheless, be a serious drawback in returning judicial archives which have been properly arranged to the municipal administrative bodies in order to combine

them with their unarranged archives. In general, it may be said that the transfer of a part of an archival collection for the purpose of uniting it with the rest of the collection should take place only when it is certain that the arranging of the collection thus brought together will be immediately undertaken and vigorously carried through. If that certainty is lacking, the objection remains that the successor agencies established elsewhere are unable to consult the documents, not because access to them is refused, but because one cannot find one's way in the collection.

There is one case where it is even less needful to reunite a dismembered collection, namely, when that collection consisted of different sections between which the dividing lines coincide with the division of functions and rights set up between two boards or officials. Something of the sort seems acceptable, for example, in the case of the Chamber of Accounts of Holland. One of the main divisions of the archival collection of that Chamber, deposited at present in Utrecht, had to do exclusively with the province of Utrecht. There is, therefore, less reason here to repair the dismemberment than in a case where such an exact delimitation is lacking.

*12. If it is difficult to reconstitute a dismembered archival collection, the various parts of that collection, wherever they may be deposited, should nevertheless be described by a single official in a single inventory, with mention of where the documents are located.*

It may happen—as has been shown in the preceding section—that there are insurmountable difficulties which make it impossible to reassemble in a single depository the *membra disiecta* of an archival collection. In this case there exists at least one means, if not of removing entirely, yet of lightening considerably, the trouble encountered in consulting a dismembered and scattered archival collection. When, for example,

the opportunity is given to interested parties to consult an outline of the contents of the whole collection, it will be easy for them to find out what part of it is of special interest for their research, and then probably it will frequently happen that all the documents which they wish to consult are found in one and the same depository. Such an outline is provided by an inventory. This consideration has led to the adoption of the above rule, in which therefore the requirement has been made that in the inventory which describes the whole collection one must indicate where each document or each item in the inventory is found.

Furthermore, by the description of an archival collection in a single inventory, that collection from a scientific point of view again becomes a whole. From that point of view, it matters little where the archival documents are kept (see Sect. 67), although it is of course to be recommended for practical reasons that they be brought together in a single depository. This last aim should indeed be our principal objective. But if difficulties stand in the way, the advice given here is one means of meeting at least the most serious inconveniences.

It is obvious that the inventory, in which the parts of the archival collection are brought together into one whole, should also be drawn up by one person. If each official is allowed to describe what is found in his own depository, the uniformity which is so necessary in the description is lost. Furthermore, it may be doubted whether every official would have a satisfactory insight into the structure of the collection and the relations existing between its parts, if he had not studied all of those parts. Each one, therefore, would have to become acquainted with the whole archival collection, including the part deposited elsewhere.—It goes without saying that the above rule does not prevent the various parts of a scattered collection from being described separately also, either in connection with the

collection with which they are deposited or in connection with other archives placed in the same depository. This latter eventuality occurs regularly, for example, with the judicial portion of village archives.—Even when the documents in question have already been transferred to another depository where the rest of the archival collection is kept, it may be desirable that they still be mentioned in the description of the collection with which for a long period they remained. If, for example, the archival collection of the States<sup>31</sup> of Overijsel is inventoried, occasion will perhaps be found to make mention of the fact that the older feudal registers, judicial records, etc., of that diocese are kept in the episcopal collection of Utrecht. The introduction and the notes accompanying the respective items are the most suitable place for this.

It needs no further demonstration that what has been said in this section in regard to describing the parts of an archival collection in a single inventory applies equally to their description in a single calendar.

*13. Archival collections which owing to special circumstances were from the beginning placed in an outside depository may be transferred in their entirety.*

The case in mind here frequently arises; thus, the oldest part of the archival collection of the States of Utrecht is to be found in the collection of the Cathedral Chapter, because the States used to meet in the Chapter house of the Cathedral; for a similar reason the collection of the States of Zeeland prior to the revolt was deposited in the collection of the abbey of Middelburg; so also, the archives of very many polder districts of Utrecht are deposited in the collection of one of the five Chapters,<sup>32</sup> because the property owners, including among

<sup>31</sup> The provincial assembly. See note 13 on page 23.

<sup>32</sup> See note 22 on page 32.



their number one of the Chapters, were ordinarily, for lack of a fixed meeting place, convoked in the Chapter room.

It is self-evident that these documents, which are entirely unrelated to the archival collection in which they are deposited, may without objection be removed. This even appears *necessary* if other documents belonging to the collection of the same board are kept elsewhere; for it is then appropriate to unite the different parts. In fact, when the board, at the time of choosing another meeting place, left its archival collection behind in the old quarters, it is of course to be attributed to negligence, which we in the interest of good order are obliged to repair.

It should be observed, however, that it is necessary to remove *all* of the archival collection found in the outside depository; for, if this is not done, the removal, whose object is the reassembling of the scattered parts of the collection, is useless. Now it may happen that an archival collection thus deposited has become partly amalgamated with the main collection. Thus, the oldest resolutions of the combined five Chapters of Utrecht are found in the book of resolutions of the Cathedral Chapter; thus also in the archives of this same Chapter are found a few files in which documents belonging to the collection of the Cathedral Chapter have been strung together with documents from the States collection. If these cases are numerous, the separation of the deposited collection is impossible; if they are rare, one should leave in the main archival collection the documents that cannot be separated, and be content with cross references in the inventory of the archives that are transferred.

14. *It is desirable that the archival collections contained in a depository be supplemented gradually from the administrative offices. As a basis for the division, one should accept the principle that the documents of a*

*given administrative branch should be transferred up to the time of the last important administrative change. But when such a change has not taken place for twenty-five years, the documents older than that should be transferred to the archival depository.*

This proposition (modified slightly in the wording) is the conclusion which the Association of Archivists adopted by a majority of votes at its first annual meeting, on July 9, 1892. Generally, either the beginning of the French rule or the deliverance from the French yoke is considered as the event terminating the old archives in this country.<sup>33</sup> This practice, dating from the middle of the 19th century, is based upon a conception formerly generally current but condemned today as wrong, which regarded the depositories of old archives purely as establishments of scholarly research and not as offices of the national or municipal administration. Furthermore, it presents one great disadvantage: since 1811 or 1813 a century has passed and administrative documents have gradually accumulated to an alarming degree. There is imminent danger that where more and more care is taken of the documents of the earlier centuries the archives of the 19th century may be neglected. If we wish to avoid the danger that they will be destroyed without distinction or discrimination in order to gain space, it will be necessary to change the closing date of the old archives and also at the same time determine for the future the principle by which the dividing line between old and new archives shall henceforth be established. That principle should be that to the archivist's jurisdiction belong all documents relating to a branch of the service which has been abolished, and among those still existing, all documents up to the last important administrative change. It goes without saying that in this matter one should not overlook a period of transition.

<sup>33</sup> 1795 or 1813, respectively.

For current use the documents in question have to a great extent lost their value. Let us give a few examples. The department of municipal excise taxes was abolished in 1865; its entire archival collection belongs, therefore, in the old archives. The Provincial Law of 1851, the Municipal Corporations Act of 1852, the Education Act of 1857, the Army Act of 1861, etc., fix similar limits; the archives of these different government branches prior to those dates may be transferred to the old archives. For this, however, one should not take a date such as that of the constitutional revision of 1848, since at that time there was indeed a change in constitutional law but no administrative change. Administrative changes in the various branches of the government have their origin, not in the constitution, but in the organic and other laws promulgated later as a result of the new constitution. For this reason, therefore, the 1813 dividing line still followed today was also badly chosen.

This section really contains a wish rather than a fixed rule. In fact, powers independent of the archivist must make the observance of this precept possible. Yet it is desirable that it be included in our manual, since it is a rule for the arrangement of archives, a rule of which the archivist can make use by the giving of advice and by means of which he will probably be able to exercise influence.

In the above-mentioned conclusion of the meeting of July 9, 1892, the expression "administrative change" was followed by the words: "which has taken place, whether or not it was brought about by a law". It does not seem necessary to adopt these words, since they do not establish any fixed rule, but contain rather an elucidation or explanation.

We also have great objection to the last sentence of the section-heading. Out of deference for the decision of the above-mentioned meeting, we have accepted the period of twenty-five years as the maximum during which documents may re-

main deposited with the current administration if no important administrative change has taken place. This period is, however, entirely arbitrary and is not suitable for the archives of all branches of the government. Thus it is certainly desirable that the Registry Office archives should remain much longer than twenty-five years in the Registry Office, and the transfer of the registers of this branch of the service, even after thirty or forty years, would be highly impractical. On the other hand, there are other documents, e.g., assessment lists of local taxes and the accounts of institutions and hospitals subject to inspection by the municipal council, which could be transferred to the archival depository long before the end of the twenty-five year period. A fixed period cannot as a general rule be established in this matter; the documents of each branch of the service must be judged on their own merits. The twenty-five year period may therefore be considered only as an average figure, to indicate that it is desirable that after a certain, but not too long, period of time the administrative offices should be relieved by the archival depositories, where documents belonging to the past and no longer needed for current administrative use may be preserved.