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RECONSIDERING ARCHIVAL CLASSICS

New Respect for the Old Order: The Context of the Dutch Manual

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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-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[1] 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.

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

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[1] 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* (München: K.G. Saur, 1984), no. 75.

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, diplomatics, and the arrangement and description of archives. In 1874, Samuel Muller Fz.[2]—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

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[2] Meaning Frederik's son, to distinguish him from his cousins.

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 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 2 July 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. Fifteen years later, the difference of opinion that existed between Muller and Fruin about revisions seemingly led to their 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.[3] 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 archives" (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 archives, 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

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[3] Peter Horsman, "Taming the Elephant. An Orthodox Approach to the Principle of Provenance," in K. Abukhanfusa and J. Sydbeck, eds., *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.

the commentary. "If we were to speak of the *'archive of a community,'* then we would be using the word 'archive' in an inappropriate meaning: such a so-called archive consists normally of various archives."[4] 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, 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).[5]

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[4] The translation by Leavitt, on page 17 of the English edition, is incorrect.

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

Arrangement. Chapter 2, which deals with the arrangement of records, begins with the following 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 arrangement of the archives within archive repositories 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 École des Chartes 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. This idea 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"[6] 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 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

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[6] Leavitt translates this as "reflection": "…an archival collection… is always the reflection of the functions of that body or of that official." *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives,* 19.

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 prescribed by the original *respect des fonds*: 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;[7] 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.

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

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[7] Leavitt translates this as "guide."

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 indexes 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 reassured 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.[8] 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, for its own members as well as its societal environment.

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[8] 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.archief-school.nl/docs/thomarch.pdf.

The *Manual* Outside the Netherlands

The German Edition

The *Manual* also drew attention abroad. A German edition translated by Hans Kaiser, and closely supervised by Muller, Feith, and Fruin, was the first to appear (1905). The translation into another language and into another archival tradition led to many questions, especially questions of terminology. Terms that gave problems in particular were those that only exist or existed in Dutch. Some professional terms also remained untranslated; for others, an adequate translation could hardly be found. And what was to be done with the examples drawn from Dutch archive history: should these not be replaced with German examples? Not at all, was the opinion of Wilhelm Wiegand, who had taken the initiative to publish a German edition. In his foreword to the German edition, he defends the fact that the book was based on Dutch relationships and Dutch archival history: only thus could the unanimity of opinion be expressed convincingly. The collegial decision-making habits of the Republic of the United Provinces did not exist in the same form in Germany, so that according to Wiegand the significance of "minutes" (e.g., in section 89) only became gradually apparent. Kaiser only referred here and there in notes to German examples. Sometimes he also had to point out deviations. Thus, a note accompanying section 3 pointed out that the rules—other than the views held by the three authors—did apply to the archives of German royal houses. Kaiser also added to the book (e.g., a note to section 16 that the *Provenienzprinzip* was already prescribed for the Prussian state archives in 1881). He also referred in section 83 to the celebrated *"Lehrbuch der historischen Methode und Geschichtsphilosophie"* by Bernheim. A brief index was added to the table of contents.

Muller, Feith, and Fruin were all responsible for additions and amendments. Section 20 and its commentary were even rewritten by the trio, apparently because the German translation of the 1898 original showed how confusing the Dutch text was.

The Italian and French Editions

A year later, the publisher notified the Association of Dutch Archivists that Joseph Cuvelier (who was working in the General State Archives in Brussels) and Henri Stein (of the Archives Nationales in Paris) had plans for a French edition. There was also interest in an Italian edition, but would it not be sufficient to produce a French edition with examples drawn from Italian archives? Muller, Feith, and Fruin, however, did not want to withdraw the permission they had already given to their colleague Giovanni Vittani, from Milan, for an Italian translation.

This translation, by Giuseppe Bonelli and Giovanni Vittani, appeared in 1908. In their extensive foreword they explained to their Italian colleagues that Muller, Feith, and Fruin restricted themselves to what was real and universal in our science. "Certainly, one only has to open the book to notice on every page that it is written in the Netherlands, but the archivist, and he alone, immediately comprehends just as well that it is not written just for the Netherlands, but equally well for all countries," *"non è scritto soltanto per l'Olanda, ma sì bene per tutti i paesi."* The Dutch examples are easily transformed into local examples. After all, what difference does it make? The archive history of any of the earlier Italian states is as different from another as from the Dutch province of Utrecht. The Italians had translated from the German version, not only because Dutch presented too many difficulties, but also because the German edition—revised and amended by the Dutch authors—was, as it were, a second Dutch edition. They considered that the Italian edition could be called the third.

Bonelli and Vittani had just as much difficulty with the technical terminology as Kaiser. Yes, "minutes" are what Italians know as *verbali*; "dossier" can be translated by *incarto*, but all those strange Dutch terms! *Vidimus* and *charter* are unknown in Italy. Bonelli and Vittani had contemplated excluding the whole of chapter 4, but in the end decided to retain it. At some time, just as in the Netherlands, the prevailing uncertainty about the exact meaning of terms—strengthened by the diversity of local tradition—would have to be resolved.

Kaiser's notes were included, sometimes with commentary from the Italian translators, who even added many notes, in which they pointed out differences in the Italian archival situation. Bonelli and Vittani permitted themselves more adaptations than Kaiser. Thus, Italian names have replaced the Dutch first and family names that appear in the commentary on section 82.

In the foreword to the Italian edition, a French edition was announced for 1908. However this did not mean that the task was done rapidly. Cuvelier and Stein were working on it. Several times inquiries were received from the Netherlands, but it only actually appeared in 1910, just in time for the international congress in Brussels. This issue, with a foreword by Muller's friend, Henri Pirenne, was adapted for Belgian and French archives. In this edition we not only find the original notes, but also those of Kaiser. Sometimes Cuvelier and Stein also drew on the Italian notes. However, unlike the German and Italian translations, the origin of the notes is not stated. Generally it is only by comparison with the other editions that Cuvelier and Stein's additions can be detected. Their note to section 18 is certainly original: "There is some truth in the saying that the archivist himself is the greatest enemy of the archives, because he systematically destroys the arrangement of his predecessor, pretending to improve the arrangement."

Like their German and Italian predecessors, they were troubled by the terminology, which was at times made even more difficult by the differences

between French and Walloon. Thus, they adopted the term *retroactes* (section 18) from the Belgian terminology, even though this term was not (and still is not) admitted by the Académie française. The term *lias* (section 86) indicates something different from the French *liasse*, which is why Cuvelier and Stein introduced the disused word *filiasse*. For "charter" the term *charte* was used, even though the translators pointed out in a note that, just as in Italy, there will be academics in France and Belgium who will use the term in a different manner to that intended by section 93.

Bulgarian, Russian, and Estonian Editions

A Bulgarian translation, based on the French version, appeared in 1912, at the behest of Christo Tachalov, director of the National Bank of Bulgaria. Dimitri Pop Ilev, a French teacher, carried out the translation. In 1925, I. A. Goloubtsov published a treatise on the Dutch method of arranging and describing in the Russian journal *Archivnou delo*, in which he included several translated citations from the *Manual*. Whenever citations from the *Manual* appeared subsequently in the Russian professional literature, they were almost always drawn from the article by Goloubtsov. A complete Russian translation (1931) of the *Manual*, from the French, only continued to exist as a typewritten version. In Estonia, the journal *Tuna* began the publication of a translation in installments in 1998.

Coming to America

To Marjorie Rabe Barritt's compelling account of the "coming to America"[9] of the *Manual*, we can only add some additional details on terminology.

The American translator, Arthur Leavitt, used the 1920 Dutch version and made a few changes. He included a number of footnotes from the French editions (including notes from the German edition that had been included in the French), while he too added notes. One example is the note to section 1 in which Leavitt indicated that if the definition of "archive" had been written now, photographic and other reproductions would certainly have been included. In a note to section 8, Leavitt explained the term *respect des fonds*. Elsewhere he explained untranslated Dutch terms. Most archival terms are given as an American equivalent, however much of the original meaning has been lost. Thus the word *oorkonde* (diploma) became "formal document," or "formal instrument," sometimes "charter." What was he to do with *archief*? According to Leavitt this could not be translated as "archive," because English only really

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[9] Marjorie Rabe Barritt, "Coming to America: Dutch *Archivistiek* and American Archival Practice," *Archival Issues* 18, no. 1 (1993): 43–54.

uses the plural form "archives."[10] Instead of the term "archive group" that was used in England, Leavitt took the term "archival collection" as the equivalent for *archief.* Leavitt recognized that a collection is understood "in the sense of things brought together by collectors," but he felt that the adjective "archival" adequately reflected the definition of section 1.

Leavitt translated the second edition of 1920; he did not have the 1898 edition at his disposal. Leavitt regarded differences between the French translation and the 1920 edition as improvements to the second edition. However, he did not know that, as we stated, there was a new section 20 by Muller, Feith, and Fruin in the German—and consequently in the Italian and French—edition, which did not appear in the second Dutch edition. Therefore he regarded the original section 20 as a revision and the new section 20 as that dating from 1898![11] This error persisted in the Brazilian and Chinese editions.

The Chinese and Brazilian Editions

The American edition was translated into Chinese, and this version of the *Manual* was published in 1959. In 1960, the VAN board granted permission for a Portuguese edition by the Brazilian Arquivo Nacional. The translator, Manoel Adolpho Wanderley, based his version mainly on the English translation, but also made use of the other editions. A revised second edition of the *Manual de arranjo e descrição de arquivos* was published in 1973.

"A Bible for Modern Archivists"

The Dutch *Manual* was regarded abroad as "a bible for modern archivists,"[12] a bible that preached the principles of structure and of provenance and that prescribed a methodology based on the archive's own features (and not drawn

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[10] Frank Upward criticized Leavitt on this point: "I do not know to what he thought Jenkinson's lengthy section on Archive Making in his *Manual* referred, or perhaps that section was too English to be read in the USA," Frank Upward, "In Search of the Continuum: Ian Maclean's 'Australian Experience' Essays on Recordkeeping," in Sue McKemmish and Michael Piggott, eds., *The Records Continuum: Ian Maclean and Australian Archives First Fifty Years* (Ancora Press in association with Australian Archives, 1994), 127, note 14.

[11] Leavitt made the same error with section 70.

[12] The expression was used by a number of people including Theodore R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 175; Elio Lodolini, *Archivistica: Principi e problemi* (Milano, 1984), 61; Cornelis Dekker, "La Bibbia archivistique néerlandaise et ce qu' il en est advenu," in Oddo Bucci, ed., *Archival Science on the Threshold of the Year 2000* (Ancona, Italy: University of Macerata, 1992), 69–79 (also published in Italian: "Che ne è stato della 'Bibbia' degli archivisti olandesi," in Oddo Bucci, ed., *L'archivistica alle soglie del 2000* [Ancona, Italy: University of Macerata, 1992], 67–77). See also Joan van Albada, "On the Identity of the American Archival Profession: A European Perspective," *American Archivist* 54 (Summer 1991): 401.

from library methods). But it was also "a most confusing textbook," as an American archivist, Henry Eddy, wrote in his own copy.[13] He found that "the illustrations, inserted to make the text clearer, are utterly weird and foreign and outside our American experience . . ." Yet Eddy's final assessment—like that of so many foreigners—was positive, thanks to the "fundamental and sound theoretical basis" of the *Manual.*

In addition, the *Manual* played a significant role in the standardization of archival terminology and archival practice. Not because people abroad could simply adopt the *Manual* indiscriminately—we have seen how much difficulty Dutch jargon gave translators—but rather because it served as an example, to be copied in their own country.

As the *Manual* was so difficult for a foreigner to understand, especially through the examples used in it, the reading of it and its influence were often restricted to a few sections and concentrated especially on the principles of structure and of provenance. For those who wish nowadays to weigh up the balance of the significance of the *Manual* abroad, there is sufficient material to be found in the proceedings of the Thirteenth Archive Congress held in 1996 in Beijing. The Canadian archivist Terry Cook was one of the speakers who referred to the *Manual.* In his report on the interaction between archival theory and practice since the *Manual* was published in 1898, he called the *Manual* "very important precisely because, for the first time, it codified European archival theory and enunciated a methodology for treating archives which has widely influenced our collective theory and practice."[14]

In the Netherlands, the *Manual* was an instrument for codification and stan-dardization, also a stick with which to beat those of other persuasions. Abroad, the role of the *Manual* was much more important in terms of the history of the archival science debate. No foreign author could participate in the discussion about principles and methods without involving the crux of the *Manual.* In that context, those curious Dutch examples and that incomprehensible and untrans-latable jargon could be ignored. Even without these typically Dutch items, the *Manual* remains a true *lieu de mémoire* in international archival science.

C o n c l u s i o n

The archival concepts that are formulated in the *Manual* are not specifically Dutch. The discussions that preceded the *Manual* about the use of diplomatics

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[13] Eric Ketelaar, "Archival Theory and the Dutch Manual," *Archivaria* 41 (Spring 1996): 31–40, repr. in Eric Ketelaar, *The Archival Image: Collected Essays* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1997), 55–65.

[14] Terry Cook, "Archives in the Post-Custodial World: Interaction of Archival Theory and Practice since the Publication of the Dutch Manual in 1898," *Archivum* 43 (1997): 193–94; Terry Cook, " 'What Is Past Is Prologue': A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," *Archivaria* 43 (1996): 22.

methods when arranging and describing archives were also held elsewhere. The paradigm of descriptive archival science may then, in retrospect, have been codified for the first time in the Netherlands, but actually the whole of post-Napoleonic Europe was its intellectual cradle.

Nevertheless, the *Manual* is also a typically Dutch product. Not because of the Dutch trio, but because of the hundred years of arranging and describing that preceded it. The idiosyncrasies of Dutch institutional history had left their stamp on the sheer volume, the structure, and the composition of the archives of the *ancien régime;* on the organization and the management of the historical archives; on the application of diplomatics; and on the development of methods of arranging and describing. Archives were scattered after the upheavals during the years 1795 to 1813, but they were not divided, mixed, or destroyed to any great extent. As a result, the principle of respect for the original structure of the archive was much easier to put into operation than elsewhere. This also meant that the central question of archival science—how can one evaluate and use an archive from various perspectives without losing the form, the structure, and the context as the framework for interpretation?—could also be given a typically Dutch response. Dutch archivists were able to develop the new method of creating an inventory within the boundaries of the repositories that they managed: that was where the inventory developed from the calendars and the classic notion of the communal historical archive concept. This latter is perhaps the most interesting outcome. The descriptive paradigm of the *Manual* developed in competition with the historical archive paradigm. The fact that this paradigm had a long tradition in the Netherlands only serves to emphasize Muller's achievement.

There are two concepts for which there appear to be no Dutch roots. The first is the concept of the organic whole, which is formulated in section 2 and which appears to fit better into the historical archive concept, than with the archive notion as defined in section 1. The second is the concept of the natural classification, which was formulated in the commentary on section 16 and which, in combination with section 58, included the demand that the original arrangement of the various series and records may only be retained if they meet the criteria that are set by the principles for a classification. If we search for the roots of these concepts, then the first names we encounter are not those of archivists like Nijhoff, but rather those of Darwin and John Stuart Mill. Is it simply chance that these two concepts should turn out to be the ones that are the least able to be applied to the practice of arrangement and description?

Speaking in general terms, it would appear that the hundred rules for the arrangement and description of archives with their universal dimensions also have roots in typical Dutch situations. And because the rules are traditional, partly mythical and yet still usable, one could, in an international perspective, label them as the silver skates of archival science.