

No corresponding advances in the specialist or regional activities of Sections and Branches have been allowed. In the near future, we can expect the headquarters expenses of the Association (which include the *Australian Library Journal*) to cost about \$48,000 *per annum*; expenses on Branch and Section activities to cost only \$8,714 *per annum*; and expenses on special projects to cost only \$1,285 *per annum*. Of the \$48,000 allocated for central office expenditure, about \$14,000, or nearly one-third, is eaten up by the *Australian Library Journal*. Surely *A. & M.*, despite its more restricted appeal, is worth a mere \$500 yearly if \$14,000 is spent on the *Journal*!

If the Association is to set out on a policy of building up central services at the expense of branch and sectional ones, it must realize that the nett result will almost certainly be a weakening of the entire body corporate. The Association depends for its continued existence upon the life it displays at its extremities — at the local level in Branch, Section and Division meetings. No such association as ours can prosper unless a large number of people in various parts of Australia continue to give it their time and their talents. Extreme centralization of activity is the best way to deny them the opportunity to serve in this way.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE UNDERLYING THE DUTCH MANUAL FOR THE ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION OF ARCHIVES

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Some eleven years ago Dr G. W. A. Panhuysen, the former State Archivist in the province of Limburg, wrote a very interesting study about the intended revision of the well-known Manual by Muller, Feith and Fruin¹. In this excellent paper the author pointed out that the principle of arranging records systematically, according to their original order, had been formulated for the first time not by Muller himself but by his predecessor Dr P. J. Vermeulen. When Vermeulen published his Inventory of the archives of the province of Utrecht up to the year 1810, he stated in its preface that one of the chief requirements for a scientific arrangement of archives should be to put every section, as far as this could be done without becoming too scrupulous, into its original sequence, this being the only practical arrangement to be substituted by no other.

Already in 1875 Vermeulen saw the importance and the necessity of restoring the original order, although the correct application of this principle in the opinion of Muller was still not very clear to him. However, the origins of what we call now the restoration of original order, a notion which in the days of Muller was confused with the principle of provenance², had its root in a previous period and they even came out as a result of

the practical needs of the then empty Dutch treasury. Between 1826 and 1831 the records of the five chapters of the principal churches at Utrecht were kept by a young lawyer Mr Gerrit Dedel who had been appointed to this function by the Board of the Amortization Syndicate which at the time administered the properties of the chapters taken over by the government. Dedel seems to have been an outstanding archivist, thanks to the instruction he received from the Syndicate on 24 October, 1826 and to his understanding of archival problems in general. According to paragraph 3 of his instruction which had been drafted by the Deputy State Archivist Jhr Mr J. C. de Jonge, the records of each chapter had to be arranged separately. The same paragraph also prescribed that the arrangement should be effected without separating the administrative from the historical documents. In the margin de Jonge noted that lots of documents have a double interest, administrative and historical. A third subsection of the same paragraph ordered the keeper in charge of the chapter archives to avoid chronology as a general and continuous basis for the arrangement of the records of the separate chapters. Instead of this he was to arrange them in geographical order and under different subjects by segregating the provinces, towns and villages and by collecting the charters and other documents under headings like Tithes, Leases, Long-Leases, Lettings, Fisheries, Houses etc. However, within these subdivisions the chronology should be respected in such a way that the most ancient documents would precede the more modern ones. The next paragraph dealt with the listing of the records of each chapter, whereas paragraph 7 of his instruction compelled Dedel to report annually on his activities to the Board of the Amortization Syndicate.

As the State Archives at Utrecht luckily possess the minutes of two of his reports, we are rather well informed how Dedel gradually became aware that the geographical order imposed on him could not be sustained, because one single register contained the description of properties which were spread over several provinces. In this way he discovered that the land owned by the various chapters had been divided according to the administering bodies to which it belonged. He also realized that the only way to arrange the records was to maintain their original order. To make this clearer I would quote Dedel literally:

within each chapter the properties were split up into different parts and belonged either to one of the chambers or to the vicaries, the eleemosynae, the poor relief fund etc. This disintegration, dating from ancient times without indication of its proper origin, was wholly independent of the geographical situation of the properties. The Big Chamber, the Little Chamber, the Church Funds Chamber as well as the Eleemosynae and the Vicaries had their own properties; they had their separate administration and separate account-books. Therefore one has been forced to follow the order which the chapters adopted by putting the documents belonging to the different chambers and other divisions together. So all the account-books and registers of the Big Chamber for instance have been arranged in chronological order and all documents relating to this chamber have been appended to them (in series or bundles). Only those records dealing with a distinct locality have been brought together separately, eager as one was to use the opportunity of going back to the geographical order.

In 1829, two years before his early death put an end to his valuable contribution to archival management and archival science in the Netherlands, Dedel at the request of the Governor of the province of Utrecht took over the supervision of the provincial records. In his report of 6 March, 1830 (quoted above) he mentioned this new assignment which he accepted not feeling free to reject it because of the importance of arranging the archives in question in an appropriate way and the absence of a more qualified person. To his great satisfaction the Deputy Councillors of the Provincial States consented to give him assistance by employing a skilful clerk. The skilful clerk who assisted Dedel during the years 1829-1831 happened to be no other than the future Provincial Archivist Dr P. J. Vermeulen. When the Provincial Archives were turned little by little into State Archives and became incorporated into a single Public Record Service, Mr Samuel Muller, one of the authors of the Manual, in 1879 became his immediate successor. Nevertheless nobody has more right to claim the authorship of the restoration of original order than his distant predecessor Gerrit Dedel, who was well aware of its scientific value. The outstanding value of this so-called "restoration principle" has been recognized and is still respected by the present-day archivists of my country, also as a guarantee of greater authenticity, although it is no longer considered as the unique principle, because it will not work, if the original order is not visible anymore or not worth retaining for lack of archival structure.

Unfortunately during the first half of the twentieth century the people in charge of the current archives had no eye for the lasting significance of a structural arrangement of records. Seduced by a decimal classification system, originally only intended for libraries, they introduced an artificial arrangement based on previously determined subjects and without taking into account the destination of the documents received and compiled by the administration, a way of arranging records completely contrary to the directions of Muller, Feith and Fruin. These gentlemen were even so optimistic as to presume that the original order of an archive group would always correspond in the main with the organization of the body from which it originated. After having become very popular for the arrangement of current local archives just before World War II, the decimal classification system in 1950 was officially introduced into the State Administration and forced upon those registrars who wanted another system more in harmony with the organization of the administrative bodies responsible for the making of records. Besides other drawbacks like creating for every distinct matter a separate file, the intricacy of the classification numbers has been one of the main objections to it. In addition it does not allow for records which deal at the same time with different subjects.

At the moment the belief in the infallibility of the decimal system for the arrangement of records has been seriously shattered. As a consequence the cry for a new system based on the administrative organization of the constitutive body, as foreseen by Gerrit Dedel, or according to the various functions or tasks of the organism is growing louder every day³.

REFERENCES

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2. H. Hardenberg, *Het restauratiebeginsel*. Nederlands Archievenblad LXIII (1958-1959), 60.
3. Viz. *Elsevier's Lexicon of Archive Terminology* (Amsterdam-London-New York, 1964), 37.