

# Few Observations on the Management of Archival Activity: Records Management or Archives Management?

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We should explain from the very beginning that the management of archival activity is clearly one specific type of social activity management applied to a particular field with its characteristics and essence.

Thus, in order to define the archival management, we must first explain the concept of management in general.

Management theory, which primarily focuses on the economic field, relies on several definitions<sup>1</sup>, each of them accurate and justified in its way.

According to William Newman, the management is an important social technique that directs, coordinates, and controls the efforts of a group of individuals in accomplishing a common goal. On the other hand, A. Mackenzie argues that the management is “a process where the manager operates with three fundamental elements: ideas, things, and people, accomplishing goals through others”. According to Jean Gerbier, the management “means organisation, the art of guiding, of administering”, whereas H. Johannsen and A. B. Robertson define management as “the art or science of directing, conducting, and administering the work of others in order to accomplish settled goals, the decision-making and leading process”. Also, the definition suggested by H. Koontz and H. Weihrich is rather interesting: “a process of planning and maintaining an environment where individuals working together accomplish efficiently established goals”.

As for the Romanian authors, we should first mention the definition given by Gh. Macovei: “*managementul desemnează un sistem de principii, de cerinţe şi reguli, precum şi talentul de a le aplica / the management implies a system of principles, requirements and regulations, but also the talent to apply them*”. In his turn, Ovidiu Nicolescu approaches the subject of the economic management, but his definition can be applied to other types of organisations, and hence it is useful to remind that in his opinion, the management resides in the study of the process and relations within these organisations “*în vederea descoperii legităţilor şi principiilor care le guvernează, a conceperii de noi sisteme, metode, tehnici şi modalităţi de conducere, de natură să asigure ridicarea eficienţei / in order to identify the rules and principles that govern them, to build new systems, methods, techniques and administration means to enhance efficiency*”. Finally, in Ion Petrescu’s view, the management consists in the ensemble of activities, disciplines, methods, and

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<sup>1</sup> For the main definitions, see Viorel Cornescu, Ioan Mihăilescu, Sica Stanciu, *Management – Baze generale*, Bucharest, 1998, p. 6-7.

techniques within the scope of directing, organising, supervising, and administering organisations so that best decisions are taken in designing and regulating their running mechanism with the engagement of their entire staff, in the sense of ensuring the best and most profitable work and making changes capable of providing the organisations with a stable, effective, and sustainable future under economic and social aspects.

Few conclusions can be drawn from the above definitions related to aspects deriving from the essence of management as a social activity: the different managerial policies are applied by people with key roles in organisations, the managers, whose mission imply directing, planning, organising, training, and controlling functions; management is applied to all types of organisations, including the Archives; management is applied at all levels of the organisation; management's main objective is the accomplishment of all goals in relation with the logistic and human resources of the organisation<sup>2</sup>.

Independent of the general theory of management in organisations and notably in economic organisations, in the last decades of the previous century a theory of the archival management began to be shaped. In the beginning, the terminology only rarely made use of the concept of **management**, other idioms being preferred when referring to the **organisation** and **coordination** of the archival activity under different forms<sup>3</sup>.

Dealing with this subject in the report *The Organisation of Archives an Archival Obligation*, presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Archives held in Washington, D.C. during September 27-October 1, 1976, two American archivists, Artel Ricks and John Powel believed that a question such as “*what is the organisation of archives?*” was hard to be answered<sup>4</sup>. The historian – they argued – sees in the organisation of archives an archival task by excellence, tending to organise an amount of records to the point that they become compatible with the researchers' requirements, in other words “the selection process that reduces to organised proportions the vast amount of internal records for the modern civilisation so that, given the research purpose, they preserve permanently those with a future cultural value, without hindering the basic integrity of the amount of material”<sup>5</sup>.

At the opposite side of the historian's perspective, the two authors cited the opinion according to which the archives organisation implied the enforcement of their scientific management in activities aimed at enhancing efficiency and only after

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> In the Romanian literature, including the archival field, the term **management** was completely absent until 1990, using in change the concept of “*organizare științifică a producției și a muncii / scientific organisation of production and labour*”, in close connection with the content of the propaganda and ideology of the epoch.

<sup>4</sup> See “*Buletinul de documentare arhivistică*”, 1976, no. 1(10), part I, p. 41.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*.

the advantage of future studies, perceived as a mere subsidiary casual supplement to efficiency<sup>6</sup>.

Somewhere between these two extremes was placed the point of view of the National Archives Administration and of the American Federal Government which, under the rules in force, defined the organisation of archives as “the planning, controlling, guiding, organising, training, and promoting of staff, as well as other inherent management activities, in the view of creating, keeping, using, and selecting records, including organising the correspondence, forms, directives, reports, classified information, photocopies, identifying data, files of current interest, equipment and supplies, recording techniques, automatic data resource processing, records preservation, records processing and sites for the storage of records and other storage facilities”<sup>7</sup>.

Before any other observations, but also leaving aside deliberately for the moment the concept of **organisation of archives**, we should point out its wide scope, which in 1976, in compliance with the American archival tradition related to the notion of archives and **records**, advertised what 25 years later would be known as **Records Management**, as defined by an ISO standard.

Before this stage, by the end of the ‘90s, the concept of **records management** became more widely used in literature, although it was not exactly a newly coined term<sup>8</sup>, but being generally accepted in the Anglo-Saxon theory and practice, it started to be equally used by other archival environments. Therefore, based on a codification developed in 1996<sup>9</sup> by the Australian Archives – **AS 4390 Australian Standard** –, in the autumn of 2001<sup>10</sup> the ISO 15489 Standard on **Records Management** was adopted.

In the West, the advent of this standard was the expression of the widely spread trend that **archival management** was part of the modernization and administrative transparency processes. Still in the West, some spoke of **archives management**, in general, and **Records Management (RM)**, in particular, as of an emerging concept that had to be looked upon seriously, adopted and implemented

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 41-42.

<sup>8</sup> In this respect, at the same International Congress on Archives of Washington, one of the rapporteurs, Guy Duboscq, spoke of **Records Management**, which he equalled, not necessarily appropriately in our view, to **pre-archiving** (See “Buletinul de documentare arhivistică”, 1976, no. 1(10), part I, p. 13).

<sup>9</sup> The standard was developed by the Archives of the Australian Federal Government and applied at their level of competence. Subsequently, the Federal Archives worked with the State Archives of New South Wales on a manual based on the strategic stages of the standard, developing them in the *Designing and Implementing Recordkeeping Systems Manual*.

<sup>10</sup> ISO 15489 was first published in Montreal, on October 3, 2001.

due to its multiple functions, but mostly due to its guiding principle/code of good practice in the field of “files management”<sup>11</sup>.

In brief, according to the concept launched by ISO 15489, management refers to that particular organisational field of records management designed to complete the efficient and systematic control for their creation, transfer, preservation, usage and final destination, in other words, the scope of the organisation whose mission is to identify the methods required for the establishment and preservation of evidence and information related to the form of records, or the itinerary principle of a record from its creation to its final destination consisting in its destruction or transfer to a public records office<sup>12</sup>.

We should highlight that this perspective on management is the organic result of the organisational and functional traditions of archives in the Anglo-Saxon world, where, on the basis of a dynamic, decentralised and transparent type of society, it was important to know the course of records from their creation to their final destination, irrespective of their place at different moments. It was correctly said that the rendition of such a course to the records life cycle enables the understanding and following of the activities performed by organisations that create them since the records are the most relevant pieces of evidence of these processes in the most various ways: legal, internal consulting, information dissemination towards third parties, etc.

The release of standard 15489 ISO was a major event for the archival community world wide being received with great interest, although by some professional environments with reserves, otherwise justified. In Canada, for example, the standard made scarcely any impression, neither in Québec not in the rest of the country<sup>13</sup>, and we shall see below why. Yet, in Western Europe and notably in France, the publication of this standard was a “bomb” for the archives and documentation sciences. In April 2002, a French version of this standard was published followed by manuals (by Drouhet, in 2002), and eventually by other manuals translated into English. Even the Directorate of French Archives, the Association of French Archivists, the Association of Swiss Archivists, and private organisations welcomed the standard and circulated it, which did not necessarily imply that it was fully or unconditionally accepted<sup>14</sup>.

In our opinion, the most significant aspect occasioned by the release of this standard in the West consisted, again and maybe more than ever, in unveiling the particularities and directions underpinning the Anglo-Saxon archival theory and

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<sup>11</sup> Johanne Pelletier, *Normalisation internationale: l'émergence des normes sur la gestion des documents*, in *Pour que survive la mémoire vive... 29-e Congrès de l'Association des Archivistes du Québec*, Montréal, 1-3 juin, 2000, Québec, 2001, p. 81.

<sup>12</sup> ISO 15489-1, *Information et documentation – “Records Management” – Partie 1: Principes directeurs*, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Ducharme, *Technologies et normes archivistiques: la norme ISO 15489 sur le records management*, “Revue Electronique Suisse de Science de l'Information”, 2005, no 2, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 2.

practice, one the one hand, and those under the influence of the French school, on the other hand.

One of the emergent fundamental questions in this context was based on the dilemma: **archives management** or **records management?** or **either one and the other?**

Before anything, this dilemma obviously resulted from the main and most known differences between the two schools with references to the concept of **archives** and, in addition, to the concept of **record**. As it is already known, for the French school, but also for other European traditional archival schools, the concept of **archive/archives** (in German “*Archiv*”, in Spanish “*archivo*”, in Italian “*archivio*”, in Russian “*arhiv*”, etc.) designates the “group of records, regardless of their age, form and medium, created or received by any individual or corporate body or by any public or private body in the course of their activity”<sup>15</sup>. In change, in the U.S., Canada (without Québec), and in other Anglo-Saxon countries, the concept of **archives**, as opposed to **records (documents)**, has a rather restrictive meaning relating to “records that are no longer in current use and that are kept, after or without selection, by the creator or its successor(s) for its/their own needs or by an archival office, due to their long term value”<sup>16</sup>. Still in the U.S. and other Anglo-Saxon milieus, distinctions are made at times between the effective existence or absence of records from archival repositories. In the first case, they are defined as **archive/archives**, whereas in the second case, they are defined as **records (official documents or documents that have not lost their official purpose)**<sup>17</sup>.

It is interesting to see that, since the terminology on archives and records highlights the essential differences between the two archival environments, paradoxically, these environments share unexpected perspectives on the time when records “gain the status of archives”. In other words, when do documents become archives? The French archival theory and practice consider that records become archives the moment they no longer modify, gaining a final form. On the contrary, the Anglo-Saxon archives science considers that records become archives the very moment of their birth/creation, and thus this cycle, from creation to final form, is very important and requires regulation. The need to appeal to records due to various reasons and at various stages of their life cycle requires the attentive pursuit of their course within the organisation, thing that can be only achieved by regulation.

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<sup>15</sup> *Obstacole în accesul, folosirea și transferul informațiilor cuprinse în arhive: un studiu RAMP pregătit de Michel Duchein*, in “Buletinul de documentare arhivistică”, 1985, no. 1 (29), p. 83.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 83-84.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*. In the RAMP study conducted by Michel Duchein, we can find quoted the 19<sup>th</sup> century archival terminology and the terminology used in early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which often referred exclusively to public records or created at least by stable institutions, such as courts, churches or universities, excluding personal or family records. This distinction is still practiced in the United States, where, in general, personal and family records are called **manuscripts**, unlike almost all the other countries, where **archives** encompass both private and public records (*ibidem*).

Considering the above, but also the terminology differences and regulating provisions, two concepts were shaped with reference to the rules of the documents course: on the one hand, **records management**, which is the ensemble of procedures opened with the birth and registration of records, and destined to organise their course, although they are kept by one specific type of creator/user, but enable the emphasis of all the stages followed by the documents from their creation to final destination (disposal or permanent preservation), based on the entries in the data base; on the other hand, **archives management** or, according to some, simply archives science, whose object is that of making records ready to be used, from the moment the creator/user ceased its activity, in other words, from the moment the records reached a non-modifiable form. It is the moment when the user transfers the records to an archival office and the latter starts to provide preservation on behalf of the owner-user/creator until the end of the legal term of preservation or usage.

It is very likely that the need to make a regulating distinction in the records cycle from the moment of their creation was perceived, where **records management** was applied, as a purely original invention, but it seems that it was not quite like this since the Australian archivists – when they developed **AS 4190 Australian Standard** and, particularly, when ISO 15489 was published – would have in fact wished to understand by this concept not only RM, but also the management of what in Europe is known as **current and semi-current records**. In reality, such an extrapolation would not have been possible given that there is no linguistic difference, but an inter-disciplinary one, as shown above. It is however true that due to a natural tendency and desire to integrate and standardise the archival language, there was an attempt to bring together the American archival definition of **records** and the French archival definitions of **current and semi-current records**. Nevertheless, as it was immediately seen, such an attempt was rather forced since on the one hand, those definitions differed greatly in content, while on the other, the French archival literature somewhat lacks<sup>18</sup> the terminology to describe the different stages of the so-called life cycle of the records. Such a scarcity is not accidental if we are to consider the comment by the Québécois archivist Daniel Ducharme on the alleged originality of ISO 15489. Explaining why the francophone Canadian archivists did not welcome the RM standard, D. Ducharme emphasised that for the francophone archival milieus this standard could not be a novelty because, with the exception of some European areas where questions related to the archives management had been left to the documentation professionals, the Québécois and other Francophone archivists had already integrated the archives science and mainly RM within organisations over 30 years before ISO<sup>19</sup>. Quoting from Jean-Yves Rousseau, Carol Couture and Lucia Duranti, Ducharme observed that, in essence, the RM beginnings had to be placed within the stage of the Western civilisation

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<sup>18</sup> See above, reference 8.

<sup>19</sup> D. Ducharme, *op. cit.*, p. 2-3.

origin<sup>20</sup>, the difference between RM and the archives science being an exclusive feature of the Anglo-Saxon world. Here the concepts of records and archives defined and still define different realities, unlike the Francophone world where the majority of the national regulations insist on the fact that the concept of **archives** comprehends that of **records**. Therefore – argued Ducharme – ISO 15489 concerns exclusively RM, but not the system of archives management, which determined the members of ICA Current and Semi-current Records Committee to translate RM by RM and not by **archives management**, or **current and semi-current records**, as some of the archivists wished<sup>21</sup>.

Approaching this issue during a recent debate organised by the Directorate of French Archives and dedicated to the compatibilities between RM and French archival tradition, the director Martine de Boisdeffre reiterated the impossibility of assimilating **records** to **current and semi-current records** due to several aspects: first, because the **current and semi-current archives** gather the entire documentation production of a body in the course of its activities; second, because **records** implies the concept of **valid record**, whereas the **current and semi-current records** gather equally the transitional forms of the records to their final stage when the patrimonial value comes into play so as to justify their preservation; and finally third, because the concept of selection refers in the two systems to different moments in the records life cycle, the current and semi-current records being controlled in the absence of the aprioristic idea of selection, which operates only later on, at the time of the record/file patrimonial appraisal, whereas the **records** system, equally underpinned by the patrimonial perspective, is oriented from the very beginning towards the preservation of its quality **evidence**.

Returning to the origin of the concept of **records management**, the fact that American archives science should not make a triumph of inventing it finds reasons in different other areas of this field covered by the history of the archives science. The same D. Ducharme above mentioned explained in 2005 that RM procedures applied before the release of ISO 15489 had been associated in the '60s – extremely interesting – with totalitarian political regimes. Moreover, he identified such procedures even in the case of Germany and German Switzerland, where files management measures had been implemented and perceived by the staff as control measures added to the strict registration rules that were applied within most public organisations<sup>22</sup>. To these examples Ducharme added his personal experience from the early '90s in the isles of Cape Verde, a former Portuguese colony. While joining the unit that was processing the archival fonds of the former Portuguese administration, the people involved in this project discovered very precise filing plans prior to 1950, most of them with detailed file management directions. There were also sanctions for the clerks that would not have followed the procedures

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 10.

enforced by the colonial administration. As Ducharme explained, that was definitely RM before the “invention” of this practice by the Americans after WW 2<sup>23</sup>. In the ‘60s, as an overt reaction against what was considered to be an authoritarian archival policy, the systematic management of files was abandoned. Copy machines were massively introduced in organisations based on the fact that archival information management policies and procedures no longer required be developed and implemented. This was followed by disastrous consequences in the files construction and the exponential growth of records accumulation. The trend intensified after 1980, when computer showed its utility in daily life, enabling the creation and circulation of records effortlessly and at a speed unseen before. The direct result was the spectacular disorganisation of archival information to the point that this period is likely to remain one of the most catastrophic in contemporary history in matters of safeguarding the archival heritage of organisations. In early third millennium, technologies started dominating society both professionally and individually, and the latest years’ situation requires the return to control procedures which relate to the ‘50s trends.

The fundamental feature of our times is the indisputable almightiness of the technologic environment in society. In such an environment, the implementation of standards, policies and procedures solely will enable the records created by organisations to provide the continuity of their management, to meet the requirements of the legal framework and ensure the taking of responsibilities. It is therefore clear that in nowadays society only a high level of standardisation/codification enables the systems of files management created by organisations to be **feasible, complete, compliant, and systematic**, in other words to meet four requirements mandatory for any files management system<sup>24</sup>.

Thus, beyond the personal experience in records management *avant la lettre*, from the perspective of some European archivists it was high time a standard such as ISO 15489 had been developed, standard primarily conceived for organisations and virtually adjustable to any type of organisation, a rule that in digitisation era is capable of ensuring a certain security to the archival information during its course. This is why the Francophone archival milieus, including the French ones, welcomed ISO 15489, whereas Daniel Ducharme appreciated in his article of 2005 that its enforcement was an “inevitable necessity”<sup>25</sup>.

What does this evolution eventually represent – Ducharme stressed ironically – if not a revenge of history relativism, which made that archival systems taken in the ‘50s for an expression of political totalitarianism to become half a century later an expression of democracy and administrative transparency. This is not in fact out of the ordinary – argued the same archivist – because technologies control by the citizens is a democratic demand and only the introduction of rules and strict

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 1.



management enable to meet unknown and undefined, but virtually predictable requirements. Since this is a moment of change in the archival profession paradigm generated by the information and communication technologies, a prompt reaction was needed for the records management – the term is certainly relative – and not in the historical archives management, RM proving to be the wanted and expected solution, reuniting the expertise of the archivist, manager and computer scientist, totally indispensable in this beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century organisational management<sup>26</sup>.

At this stage of the argumentation, equally considering the significance of the functions deriving from ISO 15489 or any other standard as guiding principles, it is time we saw the meanings of the four characteristics defined by D. Ducharme.

Why a management exercised from the **feasibility** perspective? Because a feasible files management must be able to ensure their construction from the **source/origin** of archival information; to permit the integration, arrangement and immediate identification of the body of records created or received by organisations in the course of their activity, as well as of their metadata; to protect the records and their metadata against any changes or abusive disposals.

Why a management in favour of files' **integrity**? Because this way, based on emergency plans introduced according to the assessment of risks and the potential restoration costs, the protection of vital records is provided in case of calamity for the good organisation and surveillance of the establishment; but also the control of records circulation and access is ensured.

**Conformity** management because, in compliance with the internal and external legal framework governing the organisations, this means to take into account: the requirements introduced by regulations, policies and procedures in force; the body of legislative texts adopted at national, regional and local level, which influences directly and indirectly the files management in organisations (archival legislation on personal data protection, on health, security, etc.).

Finally, **systematisation** management because this is the means providing the complete records processing, from their creation to their final destination in organisations, which includes: to identify the records; to integrate them within the related files according to the subject matter; to establish the preservation terms and the final destination of the files (disposal, preservation or selection); to locate the files in the current, semi-current, and if necessary the final stage (department, semi-current archival repository, local archival office).

In the light of the above, one question strikes again: **Records Management or archives management?**

In our view, both concepts have their weight and, at any rate, they are not mutually exclusive, as they are both species of **archival management**.

On the one hand, **Records Management** refers to the life cycle of records in organisations, or what the Romanian archival literature prefers to call creators and eventually the holders. In a sense, we have the right to neglect the differences

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 11.

between the consecrated and aforementioned archival schools. We need to remind that the French school integrated long ago a **Records Management** type of activity for what Th. Schellenberg defined as “primary age” of records, although it considers that records become archives from the moment they gain a non-modifiable form. On the other hand, the American school, simply because it considers that records become archives from the moment they are created, believed it was useful to solve their problem by the means of a special rule.

Nevertheless, it is more than obvious that RM is far from becoming an independent discipline, new and separate from the archives science, its appurtenance being indisputably co-substantial to the archival pattern.

Yet, **archives management** justifies its identity right by the simple fact that the life cycle of records does not end with the period they are kept by creators/holders/users. At the moment established through records schedules configured by RM archiving systems, with the exception of those records selected on the way based on terms settled by these schedules, the rest of the records, i.e. the most valuable from axiological perspective, are transferred to public records offices, which entails a different type of management whose objectives are compliant with the registration system, preservation, conservation, and access requirements.

At the end of these observations, another question arises somewhat inevitably: in the long run, what are the relations of the Romanian archival theory and practice with **RM** and **archives management**?

As it may be implicitly understood, these relations existed and still exist, and it is advisable that they last, a fact dictated by the nature of the discipline and more recently by the necessity that, given the new status Romania acquired on January 1, 2007, a convergence of good practice and normative is accomplished with the EU, including the field of archives.

As for **records management**, in the terms defined by D. Ducharme, in Romania this type of activity was carried out and developed in close relation with the nature of the social and political regime installed here in the aftermath of WW 2. The objectives of that regime to have a strict control over all societal levels, including the archives, determined at first the fundamental change of the legal framework and then the articulation of the new terminology derived from the new legislation and the implementation of these innovations in the archival practice. Conceptually, this course was opened on January 25, 1951 by the Decree no 51 of the Grand National Assembly Presidium of the People’s Republic of Romania, which transferred the State Archives from the Ministry of Public Education to the Ministry of Interior<sup>27</sup>. The Decree was followed by the Decision of the Council of Ministers no 472/1951 on the competences and functioning rules of the Directorate of State Archives, which stipulated that the new management board would be in charge of guiding and controlling the arrangement and preservation of the archival material “*al instituțiilor*”

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<sup>27</sup> See *Dicționar al științelor speciale ale istoriei. Arhivistică, cronologie, diplomatică, genealogie, heraldică, paleografie, sigilografie*, București, 1982, p. 154-155.

și întreprinderilor de orice fel / created by the institutions and enterprises of any type” and also of collecting, selecting and classifying the archival material from all over the country. In order to meet such requirements, in 1954 the State Archives developed and circulated the “*Instrucțiuni generale pentru organizarea și funcționarea arhivelor ministerelor, instituțiilor centrale și locale, organizațiilor obștești și cooperatiste, întreprinderilor, gospodăriilor agricole de stat și a gospodăriilor agricole* / General Instructions for the Organisation and Functioning of the Archives of Ministries, Central and Local Institutions, Collective and Cooperative Organisations, Enterprises, State Agricultural Cooperatives and Agricultural Collective Farms”. The aim of these regulations was to make order in all the archives, preventing the destructions of records and organising their usage framework. In July 1957, the Decree no 353 and the Decision of the Council of Ministers no 1119 were adopted. They established “*Fondul Arhivistic de Stat al Republicii Populare Române* / the State Archival Fonds of the People’s Republic of Romania”, the concept around which the entire archival policy was articulated for 15 years, based on the idea of centralisation, control, and uniformity at any price and any risk. By the end of 1957, these two rules were completed by “*Instrucțiunile generale nr. 6720* / the General Instructions no 6720”, destined suggestively to provide “*organizarea și funcționarea arhivelor organelor și instituțiilor de stat, ale organizațiilor economice socialiste și ale organizațiilor obștești* / the organisation and functioning of State bodies and institutions, of socialist economic organisations and collective organisations”. In parallel, there was implemented “*Indicatorul-tip cuprinzător al termenelor de păstrare a dosarelor, registrelor și a altor materiale documentare comune organelor și instituțiilor de stat, organizațiilor economice socialiste și organizațiilor obștești* / the Guide of preservation terms for files, registers, and other documentary materials used by the State bodies and institutions, socialist economic organisations and collective organisations”. In 1971, the Decree no 472 was adopted, replacing the concept of “*fond arhivistic de stat* / State Archival Fonds” with “*fond arhivistic național* / National Archival Fonds (NAF)”, wider than the previous, including “*documentele proprietate de stat cât și pe cele create și deținute de organizațiile obștești, cultele religioase și persoanele fizice* / both State owned records and records created and held by collective organisations, religious cults, and natural persons” and rendering mandatory the transfer to the State Archives of the NAF records created by **museums, libraries, religious cults organisations, and natural persons**. Some of the principles defined by the Decree no 472/1971 were resumed – in spirit – by the Law no 16/1996, which abandoned though the restrictive provisions and those against the right of property over records.

From the perspective of records management policy, of a particular significance during the Communist regime were two sets of rules on the archival activity of the so-called organisations creating archives, “*Normele tehnice pentru înregistrarea, gruparea în dosare, selecționarea și păstrarea documentelor scrise și tipărite, a sigiliilor și ștampilelor de către organizațiile socialiste și celelalte organizații* / The technical rules for the registration, arrangement within files,

selection and preservation of records written and printed, of seals and stamps by the socialist and other organisations”, adopted in 1973, and “*Instrucțiunile privind activitatea de arhivă la creatorii și deținătorii de documente, aprobate de conducerea Arhivelor naționale prin Ordinul de zi nr. 217 din 23 mai 1996 / The instructions on the archival activity of creators and holders of records, approved by the managing board of the National Archives by the General Order no 217 of May 23, 1996*”, respectively.

One can notice that at least some of the legislative and normative measures taken during the Communist regime related to the status of records created by organisations, this concern being unveiled also in different areas of the archival theory and practice. For example, new concepts were shaped – not by accident – such as that of “*arhivă de stat / State Archives*”, perceived as the body of records property of the State, valuable politically, economically, socially, culturally, scientifically, etc., and requiring “*o evidență centralizată și păstrarea lor în instituții specializate / a centralised registration system and their preservation by specialised institutions*”<sup>28</sup>. In contrast with this concept, but equally important, seems to have been the concept of “*evidență a documentelor din Fondul Arhivistic Național / registration system of the National Archival Fonds records*”, defined as the ensemble of the registration systems used to identify the content of fonds and collections **held by the State Archives and organisations**, in the view of completing the documentary base, etc. Under the same chapter was launched the concept of “*evidență a fondurilor deținute de organizații / registration system of the fonds held by organisations*”, considered as a registration system of these organisations based on central and local creators, applied by the State Archives and their branches, and using aids such as the forms “*Situația fondului / Fonds Status*” and “*doșarului fondului / fonds file*”, introduced for the first time as a result of the new archival legal framework<sup>29</sup>.

The control of the record's itinerary within a strictly determined regulated framework manifested during the Communist regime also as a result of applying the registry type of archives, based on mandatory forms and aids such as the entry register that functioned closely connected with the archival retention schedule or the introduction of the guide and control task performed by the State Archives in the organisations creating and holding records. As for this function, it is worth mentioning that quite frequently the guidance and control attempted to determine the existence of the entry register, the way it was filled in, whether the established circuit of the records was followed from their registration – file code entry specified by the retention schedule –, to the filing of records within the departments creating them, where their administrative age was taking its course as current archives, their transfer to the storage archives, the selection of the non-permanent records, their disposal and separation from those with historical value, in the view of transferring them to the State Archives.

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 35.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 110-111.

This entire itinerary was based on criteria specified by the basic objective of the archival activity, i.e. the necessity to prevent the total destruction/loss of the permanent storage records, the essential source of enriching the NAF and, concomitantly, of preserving the records with limited storage terms in compliance with their conditions, so that these records play their role of contributing to their creator activity administration. Under this last aspect, it is clear that although many times the archivists declared themselves against the obligation of being in charge of the preservation of temporary storage records, according to the terms established by the retention schedule, considering that this is the exclusive duty of the creator, in reality it became a rule that the selection works be examined in order to prevent premature selection and disposal of certain records.

In this situation, the formal and substantial verification of the selection works came closer to what other archival schools define as records **appraisal**. Even in the case of ISO 15489, although it does not use the term of appraisal, it actually derives from the context, being present in the dispositions on the moment of conceiving and implementing the so-called **archiving system**. According to the Standard, to implement such an archiving system means “to establish the retention/preservation terms and to apply them for records that have a permanent value under the regulating framework”. Therefore, both ISO 15489 and the philosophy underpinning the development and verification of the selection works in the Romanian archival practice focus mostly on the preservation of permanent value records. If we mention the stages of the creation and implementation of an archiving system – consisting in the preliminary survey, assessment of organisation activity, identification of archival requirements, assessment of existing system, development of the strategy to meet the archival requirements, development of the archiving system, its implementation, *a posteriori* control, etc. – we shall notice that they resemble the criteria followed in Romania in the organisational stages related to the functioning framework of the creators’ archives, the archival operations thereof, their premises and consequences, etc.

As for the **archives management**, it most likely involves a Romanian base of discussions in relations with international theoretic and practice heritage of the discipline. From the aspects that shape this common but non-uniform heritage of the archives management did not miss and do not miss nowadays the supply of a legal framework for the functioning of the institution, the development and enforcement of work technical regulations within the system, the registration system of archival fonds and collections, their scientific processing, their preservation and conservation under the rules in force, the supply of records in microfilm and digital form, their restoration, the computerisation and digitisation of archives, the access to records, the relations between the archives and society, their place within the public space, archives buildings, archives personnel, its training, the supply of archives logistic needs, the permanent enriching of the archival heritage and others.

Each of these components of the archives management can have its own separate strategy and, in a relative sense, can become an independent action plan, equal with a regulated management in that field.

As a conclusion, **the archival management** is an essentially important activity in the functioning of archives anywhere, its two-folded efficiency, **the records management** and **archives management** being an essential condition for the good functioning of an organisation and the fulfilment of its universal role, that of preserving and valorising the memory of each nation and the memory of the world equally.

Translated from Romanian by Adina Rățoi

## Rezumat

### *Câteva considerații privind managementul activității arhivistice: managementul documentelor sau managementul arhivelor?*

Articolul pune în discuție o temă de mare actualitate pentru activitatea arhivistică și anume managementul acesteia, privit ca parte a managementului activității sociale, pornind din capul locului de la intenția de a opera delimitările terminologice necesare. Întemeiat pe bibliografia esențială a subiectului, cu precădere bibliografia străină, pe tradiția și experiența celor mai prestigioase școli arhivistice din lume – școala franceză și cea anglo-saxonă –, dar luând în seamă și teoria și experiența arhivistică românească, autorul stabilește că, în pofida ușurinței cu care sunt întrebuițate uneori în limbajul curent noțiuni ca “managementul arhivelor”, “managementul arhivistic” sau “managementul documentelor”, pe terenul rigorii științifice se impun nuanțări obligatorii, unele devenite deja locuri comune în medii arhivistice din străinătate.

Articolul are în centru întrebarea: “managementul arhivelor”, “managementul documentelor/*Records Management*”, sau “managementul arhivistic”? Potrivit autorului, fiecare din cele trei concepte are greutatea sa ori, în tot cazul, acestea nu se exclud. Mai mult decât atât, “managementul arhivelor” și “managementul documentelor” sunt specii/ramuri ale “managementului arhivistic”.

Cât privește “managementul documentelor”, în expresia conferită de Norma ISO 15489, acesta are în vedere viața documentelor la organizații sau, cum preferă să spună literatura arhivistică românească, la creatorii și, eventual, deținătorii acestora. Făcând abstracție de diferențele dintre școlile arhivistice consacrate și menționate mai sus, este de reținut că școala arhivistică franceză, deși este de părere că documentele devin arhivă din momentul în care au dobândit o formă nonmodificabilă, a integrat demult o activitate de tip *Records Management* pentru ceea ce Th. Schellenberg numea “prima vârstă” a documentelor. La rândul ei, școala americană, susținând că documentele devin arhivă din

chiar momentul nașterii lor, a socotit util să rezolve problema acestora printr-o normă specială amintită.

Față de opiniile celor două școli, este mai mult decât evident că *Records Management* (RM) este departe de a constitui o disciplină de sine stătătoare, nouă, distinctă de arhivistică, apartenența sa fiind indiscutabil consubstanțială matricei arhivistice.

În același timp, "managementul arhivelor" își justifică dreptul la identitate prin faptul simplu că viața documentelor nu se încheie odată cu perioada în care ele rămân la creatori/deținători/utilizatori. La momentul stabilit prin calendarele de păstrare configurate în sistemele de arhivare ale RM, exceptând documentele selecționate pe parcurs, la termenele fixate prin aceste calendare, restul documentelor și cele mai importante ca vocație axiologică intră în serviciile publice de arhivă, implicând un alt fel de management, ale cărui obiective trebuie să fie în consonanță cu necesitățile de a asigura evidența, păstrarea, conservarea și accesul la aceste documente.

Acesta fiind stadiul în care se află astăzi problematica managementului arhivistic din străinătate, o eventuală întrebare privind prezența unor teme contingente în preocuparea arhivisticii românești conduce la constatarea că, dacă sub aspect terminologic noțiunile de mai sus au fost mai degrabă absente din literatura arhivistică românească, conținuturi de factură managerială au existat, indiscutabil, indiferent de cum li s-a spus într-o perioadă sau alta. În această ordine, deși pare greu de bănuțit, faptul cel mai surprinzător a fost identificarea unor practici de natura RM, așa cum este definit de ISO 15489, în activitatea arhivistică românească din a doua jumătate a secolului trecut. Articolul le pune în evidență pe matricea caracteristicilor societale de esență totalitară prezente cu certitudine și în alte zone ale lumii, după cum cu pertinentă subliniază un cunoscut autor canadian. Este certă, așadar, existența în domeniul managementului arhivistic a unor vechi interferențe între mediul arhivistic românesc și cel internațional și este de dorit ca ele să reziste și pe mai departe, faptul fiind dictat de natura disciplinei și, mai nou, de necesitatea ca, în noua calitate pe care a dobândit-o România după 1 ianuarie 2007, să se realizeze convergența normativă și de bună practică, inclusiv în domeniul arhivistic.