

*Application of the Principle of Free Provenance in The Archives of Yugoslavia*

*Summary*

In the spring of 1953, after having acquired its first archives, The Archives of Yugoslavia began work on their cataloguing with the aim of arranging the archives according to the registry principle. During the first decade, the arranging of the archives was based on the principle of provenance. The original order was maintained, or if not known, it was reconstructed where possible. However, the materials were mixed up and it was difficult or impossible to restore the original order due to a large number of errors and the absence of archival markings. Administrative record books could not be used as sources of information because they were incomplete, badly and inconsistently kept and even missing. Since the archive of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was in a similar state, in 1962 it was decided that it should be arranged according to the principle of free provenance. Ever since, this organizational principle, based on the function or activity of the archive's author, has been used most often in arranging the archives of legislative, administrative and other bodies, organizations and institutions of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and especially Socialist Yugoslavia in the period between 1944 and 1953. The use of this principle enables the emergence of thematic units and orders the archive in a way which gives researchers rapid access to the wanted materials.

The free provenance principle necessitated the introduction of a new information management medium called the summary analytical inventory. At the end of 1967, a proposal was accepted regarding the recording of arranged archives. The following year, a formal directive was issued in the form of a set of recommendations. The structure and form of the inventory, as the primary instrument for determining the structure and content of the materials, was defined. Due to the lack of consistency in addressing certain issues regarding arranging and processing of archival materials, The Archives of Yugoslavia issued a directive for arranging and processing of archival materials and creation of information management media in 1994. A formal method of describing and indexing item descriptions was prescribed. The production of information management media was brought in line with the requirements of digital information processing, which allows the search of the descriptions of the archival materials and other relevant information about the archive.