

УДК 002.4+930

DOI 10.28995/2073-0101-2018-1-155-168

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The Meaning of the Term 'Reconstruction of the Archival Fond' in the Russian Historiography

Abstract

The article reviews Russian scholarship on reconstruction of documentary complexes. The author traces changes in the conception of 'reconstruction of the archival fond' and identifies its basic characteristics. The term 'reconstruction of the archival fond' first appeared in 1950s in two meanings: (1) scientific study in order to establish documents composition of lost medieval

archives; (2) reunification of segmented fonds in a single archive. In the late 1990s – early 2000s, the term 'reconstruction' was redefined as document description of fragmented documentary complexes without the purpose of their reunification. The documentary complexes may have been fragmented both before and after the formation of the archival fond. The object of the reconstruction is not in the documents, but in the information they contained. Documents are selected according to fond provenance (they were to proceed from the same creator) or office of origin. Thus, the term 'reconstruction' grows closer to the concept of archival fond arrangement in the sense of linking documents to creators or offices of origin and also defining chronology of the fond. Practical significance of the reconstruction consists in addressing problems of archival heuristics. The reconstruction includes studying of history of the fond creator, ascertaining places of storage of all fond parts, establishing links between its documents, identifying the nature of the document flow, correcting errors in description, detecting duplicate and absorbed information. Product of the reconstruction of an institution archival fond is called 'documentary fond,' while product of the reconstruction of a personal provenance fond is called 'archive of a person.' The reconstruction produces a representation of a documents complex, as if it was complete and undivided; the representation itself may be a scientific text (a fond description) or a catalog (a series). Currently, the concept of the reconstruction of the fond is regarded in the context of the development of the archives' digital resources and implies a reunification of fragmented archival fonds or creation of new ones by posting digital copies of documents on the same Internet site.

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### Keywords

Reconstruction of the archive fond, principle of the indivisibility of fonds, terminology of archiving, documentary fond, fragmented fond, scattered fond.

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Submitted 22.08.2017, published:

LAPTEVA, T. N. Znachenie termina ‘rekonstruktsiya arkhivnogo fonda’ v otechestvennoi istoriografii [The meaning of the term ‘reconstruction of the archival fond’ in the Russian historiography. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2018, no. 1, pp. 155-168. doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2018-1-155-168

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