

# The terminological dimension of provenance description in the Multilingual Archival Terminology – ICA: some translation problems

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# INTRODUCTION

- Archival Science issues have been the subject of increasing reflection in the area of Information Science.
- Procedures, instruments and products of document organization under archival science have found shelter in scientific discussions in the field of KO.
- Standing at a nuclear position with respect to archival knowledge organization procedures, classification, arrangement and description are traditionally led by the principles generically named as ***provenance***.

# PROVENANCE as a core archival principle

- **Provenance**

- core element for archival theory
- scientific base of archival science
- different conceptual and terminological meanings in different countries.
- unfold in other sub-principles depending on the context.

# PROVENANCE as a core archival principle

- Some efforts to systematize the archival terminology:
  - Standardized Terminology List, 1986 by Ontario Archivists
  - Elsevier's Lexicon of Archive Terminology, 1964 are noteworthy.
  - **Multilingual Archival Terminology, 2010**

# The terminology issue

- Such efforts, in turn, lead to a terminology reflection already highlighted by Michèle Hudon (1997), regarding the conceptual connotations that a term assumes from the cultural context in which different languages are inserted.
- The terminology issue is a fundamental element for archival science practice, as the Manual for Dutch Archivists in topic 84 already mentioned the need for terminological control as an aid to clarity .
- In archival science, terminology has been a matter of concern, especially since World War II .

# The terminology issue

- This issue brings, in turn, difficulties of contextual nature:
  - the need to ensure effective cultural warrant to terms relative to the contexts and languages involved (Beghtol, 2002, 2005);
  - inaccuracy of definitions and national uses, divergence in vocabulary of a common language between homophones countries,
  - archival science has an intrinsic relationship with legal and administrative systems of a country.

# Methodology

- Definitions and translation equivalents in Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, French and English in ICA Multilingual Archival Terminology regarding archival principles, with an emphasis on ***provenance***.
- Data collection started from the terms principle (English), principe (French), principio (italian and spanish) and princípio (portuguese).
- Patterns for entries for terminology dictionaries worked by Krieger and Finatto (2004) to the construction of analytical cards for data collection.
- Terminology record with: ***entry words*** (terms), ***terms recovered***, ***term definition***, ***country and language***, ***equivalents in foreign language***, ***information of grammatical category*** ***contextual sources***, ***bibliographic sources (citation)***, ***cross references***, ***explanatory notes (linguistic, technical, encyclopedic)***.

# Methodology

<b>Term</b>	Principle (in English)
<b>Term recovered</b>	Principle of provenance
<b>Term definition</b>	<p>1 - The basic principle that records/archives of the same provenance must not be intermingled with those of any other provenance; frequently referred to as "respect des fonds".</p> <p>Citation: [ International Council on Archives, "Dictionary of Archival Terminology" (Draft Third Edition/DAT III, 1999) <a href="http://www.staff.uni-marburg.de/~mennehar/datiii/engterm.html">http://www.staff.uni-marburg.de/~mennehar/datiii/engterm.html</a> ]</p>
<b>Country</b>	United Kingdom
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Equivalent terms in the foreign language</b>	<p>English: respect des fonds(en), French: respects des fonds(fr), German: Provenienzprinzip(de), Italian: principio di provenienza(it), Portuguese: princípio da proveniência (pt), Spanish: principio de procedencia o de respeto a los fondos(es),</p>



# Results and discussion

- First term searched: *principio* (and their idiomatic variations)
- Three concepts retrieved:
  - the principle of provenance
  - principle of original order
  - principle of pertinence.
- Clear distinction between **provenance**, **respect des fonds** and **original order**.
- Some european countries: degrees of provenance

# Results and discussion

- **Italian**
  - *Principio di provenienza* (provenance + original order)
  - *Principio di ricostruzione del ordinamento originario*
- **French**
  - *principe de respect des fonds* (provenance + original order)
  - *principe de respect de l'ordre primitif / originel*
- **Spanish**
  - *principio de procedência* (provenance + original order)
  - *principio de proveniência*
  - *principio de respeto al orden original*
- **Portuguese**
  - *Princípio da proveniência*
  - *Princípio do respeito à ordem original.*
- **English**
  - *Principle of provenance*
  - *Principle of original order*

# Some problems detected...

- We observe some problems in this terminological instrument, such as:
  - When one searches the term principle of provenance, in Portuguese, English, Spanish or Italian, there is the equivalent term “*respeito aos fundos/respect des fonds*” which, theoretically, following the terminology and French concept, would embrace the two degrees of principle. This example demonstrates that there is a terminological confusion in the area.
  - The definitions presented in each language are not representative of the archival terminology context of the country.
  - Because it is an open instrument for editions by users, the instrument becomes open for terminological confusion, not taking differences between the European and South American contexts into consideration.

# Conclusions

- Provenance occupies a nuclear position in the theoretical construction of the field of archival science, but this principle was appropriated differently in different countries and languages involved, often unfolding or reshaping into new principles.
- The diversity of involved languages in specialized lexicons requires going beyond the dimension of translation to incorporate the idiosyncratic aspects inherent to each involved culture, confirming issues discussed above by Hudon (1997) and Beghtol (2002, 2005).
- Important aspects such as synonymic gradation and explanatory notes were not present.
- A heterogeneity in treating the terms in different languages is observed
- Contextual sources and cross references are randomly present.
- We also observed cases of duplication of information, both in the definitions and in equivalent terms in other languages.

# Conclusions

- With this study, we expect to contribute to the improvement of ICA Multilingual Archival Terminology, in particular concerning the insertion, configuration and relationship among its terms, with a special emphasis to equivalence, as well as a more effective reflection on the theoretical configuration of provenance, as a way to cement its distinctive features and applicabilities.
- To do so, some ideas emerge such as the construction of a multilingual database of archival concepts in several countries (following the EuroWordNet model) where each country could create its own database with its language-specific concepts and definitions about archival science that would later compose a final database more consistent and reliable (Vossen, 1997) . The construction of these regional or national database allows that each involved language works in its own linguistic-cultural context.

# Conclusions

- For that, the different countries could count with their National Archives databases and systems as well as their own theoretical landmarks as a starting point to the elaboration of a national database. This initiative could minimize the translation problems, concerning the domestication, foreignisation and internalization (Karänen, 2006)<sup>34</sup> and as a consequence could also contribute to the strengthening of Archival Science as a discipline based on a well-defined terminology.

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Grazie mille!

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