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'La Tour de Babel,' 35 years later: challenges and tools relating to the translation of archival terminology from English to French

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ABSTRACT

In 1985, Michel Duchein published 'Les Archives dans la Tour de Babel: Problèmes de Terminologie Archivistique Internationale' in *La Gazette des Archives*. To this day, his article remains the most articulate expression of the difficulties linked to the translation of archival terminology between French and English. It was written as a reaction to the publication of the *Dictionary of Archival Terminology* by the International Council on Archives (1984). Departing from Duchein's work, this article assesses the current situation regarding the translation of archival terminology from English to French. The article mainly considers four existing tools dealing exclusively with archival terminology: the Elsevier *Lexicon of Archive Terminology* (1964), the International Council on Archives' *Dictionary of Archival Terminology* (1984), the Association Française de Normalisation's *Vocabulaire des Archives* (1986) and the International Council on Archives' *Multilingual Archival Terminology* database (2012- …). This article is based on an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each tool, and on practical tests carried out during the translation of a corpus of texts for *Comma*, the journal of the International Council on Archives. This article intends to show that the existing tools for translating archival terminology from English to French lack either up-to-date content or reliability.

Introduction

'If France does not take part in international working groups on tools and standards, it cannot put forth its views and needs regarding preservation.'[1] This was tweeted on 5 April 2019 by @ProgVitam, the official Twitter account for the VITAM program. VITAM, which stands for Values Intangible Transmitted to the Archive for Memory, is an initiative of French recordkeepers that aims at '[tackling] the challenges of digital archiving for the whole data lifecycle.'[2] The tweet is a call for French recordkeepers at large to take part in international meetings so that technical tools and standards might be fit for the countries' needs. Implicit in the tweet is the idea that needs might differ from one country to another, due to the differences that have evolved in recordkeeping across the globe. Paul Delsalle makes this point clear in the very first lines of his book on the history of archival practice: 'The writing of a definitive universal history of archival

practice from its origins to the present day presupposes a perfect understanding of the history of all civilisations, on each continent and throughout recorded time, along with a knowledge of their languages, legislation, traditions and culture.'[3]

As Delsalle shows, several factors have shaped different national or cultural archival practices, but these different practices have also affected each other internationally. In the twentieth century, ways for international cooperation in the recordkeeping profession multiplied, and international associations were created with the aim of linking archivists and records managers everywhere, notably with the foundation of the International Council on Archives (ICA) on 9 June 1948 (although a consultative committee already existed since 1931).[4] The emergence of these forums for the exchange of knowledge and perspectives on recordkeeping have naturally required the communication of technical terms and concepts across languages.

Questions linked to archival terminology in the international context are not a new phenomenon. As early as the first International Conference of the Round Table on Archives (CITRA) meetings, in the 1950s, translation of terminology was discussed and plans for tools to help recordkeepers understand their foreign colleagues started to be made.[5] The translations between English and French were of particular importance as these were the two working languages of most international organisations, within and outside recordkeeping. In some cases, organisations have also added other languages, such as Spanish, to their working languages. Although it has no official language, the ICA for example uses English and French as its main languages to communicate with its members;[6] however, a version of the ICA website is available in Spanish and a Spanish translation is added to all of the Council's social media posts. Additionally, translations in other languages (like German, Russian, Chinese, Arabic, or, once again, Spanish) are available for part of the material available through the ICA (for example *Comma*, the journal of the ICA has its abstracts translated in all those languages).

As the former editor of *Comma*'s predecessor, *Archivum*,[7] from 1968 to 1980, the French archivist and historian Michel Duchein would have been familiar with the importance of translation for international professional cooperation, and as a translator himself, he would have been aware that this did not come without challenges. He published 'Les Archives dans la Tour de Babel: Problèmes de terminologie archivistique internationale' in *La Gazette des archives* in 1985. To this day, his article remains the most articulate expression of the difficulties linked to the translation of archival terminology between French and English. While other articles have mentioned this topic in the French literature, it was never as closely examined, nor was it the chief subject of study. However, can we say that the question of the translation of archival terminology is still relevant today if the most complete article dealing with it dates back to 1985?

There seems to be a current trend in archival science to look again at questions of terminology across cultures and languages. In 2017, in *Research in the Archival Multiverse*, Anne Gilliland, Sue McKemmish and Andrew Lau pointed out that '[o]ne of the barriers to the dissemination of research was the language of publication', although this issue was not studied in details beyond the introduction.[8] More recently, in April 2019, Amany Mohamed published an article entitled 'International trends in standardizing archival terminology: The Multilingual Archival Terminology (MAT) as a model.'[9] Mohamed is the current translator for Arabic on *Comma*'s editorial board, and her article highlights the importance of standardisation in international terminology and

investigates how the MAT database handles the inclusion of Arabic. Subsequently, Mohamed's paper would be joined by other new publications on the topic. A call for papers for *Archival Science* stated: 'We are calling for papers that examine the development of archival practices, theories and traditions in different national and social contexts, and their transposition and movement over time.'[10] This call emerged from Archival Discourses, the International Intellectual History of Archival Studies (IIHAS) Research Network, which was formed in 2018 'to look critically at [the] history [of archival practices, theories and traditions] to better understand inherited ideas and present-day norms.'[11] One of the means to reach this aim was to '[promote] the translation of canonical archival texts across languages.'[12] Later that year, a call for paper was issued by *Archives and Manuscripts* for this special issue on the theme 'Scholarly and Professional Communication in Archives: Archival Traditions and Languages.'

This paper seeks to contribute to and update the work on archival translation. Departing from Duchein's 'Les Archives dans la Tour de Babel', it will assess the current situation regarding the translation of archival terminology from English to French. The impetus for this work was the emergence of new tools and concepts, as well as the rise of digital material and its preservation, since Duchein's article; these developments have necessitated the translation of new terms. International communication between record-keepers has been facilitated through technological means in the last decades: Twitter has had an active community of recordkeeping professionals for a few years and more recently, global circumstances have encouraged conferences to move online. Yet, differences in archival terminology across countries remain a barrier. This article seeks to contribute to the current research on how to bridge some of these differences, but the topic of translation in archival science and in the recordkeeping context is a much larger one than can be covered by this article. The angle chosen for this study encourages a reflection on how to translate but there is also a necessity to discuss how much we need to translate, and what is at stake when we do – and when we do not. Such a topic would be worthy of its own article.

My paper will address three research questions: how can the differences in technical language from English to French hinder intercultural communication for archivists and records managers? What tools have been developed to address these problems? And, what gaps still remain?

A first part will examine how the situation has evolved for the translation of archival terminology from English to French. Starting from an analysis of Michel Duchein's 'Tour de Babel', it identifies challenges faced during the translation process, some of which were identified by Duchein in 1985 and are still relevant to this day, while others have newly appeared or been amplified.

A second part will review four tools that the recordkeeping community has developed from the 1960s to today in order to facilitate translations from English and French: the Elsevier *Lexicon of Archive Terminology*,[13] the ICA's *Dictionary of Archival Terminology*,[14] the *Vocabulaire des archives*[15] published by the French Organisation for Standardisation (Association française de normalisation or AFNOR) and the ICA's *Multilingual Archival Terminology database*.[16] The comparison of the four tools will analyse their formats, layouts and the extent of their content and highlight their respective strengths and weaknesses, enabling a better understanding of how to reach an approximate version of what Michel Duchein called 'the Esperanto of archival

terminology.'[17] This paper will particularly focus on a practical review of the latest tool developed, the MAT database, carried out while translating a corpus of abstracts from English to French for *Comma*. The corpus of study consists of a four-pages-long introduction, along with seventeen abstracts, for the 2018–1/2 issue of the journal. The translations also provide an occasion to put the MAT database to the test. Although there has been a study about the terminology surrounding the concept of provenance based on MAT,[18] it appears that, nearly a decade after the launch of the database, there has not yet been any survey of its practicality in translating from English to French. This exercise helps highlighting the gaps that remain today, and through concrete examples, triggers reflexions on how to resolve these gaps.

Comma 2018–1/2 is a special issue written by members of the ICA Section on University Archives (ICA-SUV). The fact that the translations were done for a special issue had an impact, as the topics covered always related to university archives, but the terminology nevertheless remains varied.

Beyond the corpus based on published *Comma* material, this paper makes frequent references to Francophone literature; an English translation is provided for all quotes from French texts. These translations were all done by the author, unless stated otherwise. The original French quotes are available in the endnotes.

The tools used for translations included some developed specifically for archival terminology (the MAT database and the *Dictionary of Archival Terminology*) along with general translation tools (bilingual dictionaries and databases, English and French dictionaries, and dictionaries of synonyms). Both types of tools were used in order to translate archival terminology, as the ones developed by the profession sometimes lacked an appropriate solution for the specific context of translations. For all archival terms, a search was conducted in the MAT database: priority was given to MAT over other tools as it is the most recent one. MAT is also a tool developed by recordkeeping professionals for recordkeepers and this is why it was chosen as a preferred point of reference. The findings related to MAT presented in this paper were chosen as representative of the problems encountered while using the database in the context of the translations done for *Comma*.

Definitive translations were chosen according to context but it is also important to bear in mind that translation comes with a degree of subjectivity and the final output will not be the only possibility. The translations were both produced and proofread by Francophones from metropolitan France,[19] and the outcome might have been different if they had been made by Francophones from anywhere else in the world. Lastly it is important to bear in mind that this article is based on translations from English to French. The findings detailed in the following pages could be partly or even entirely different if the translations had been from French to English, or between different languages.

The situation since 'Les Archives dans la Tour de Babel: problems of terminology and translation since the 1980s

Michel Duchein's 'Tour de Babel'

Michel Duchein is a French archivist and historian. After graduating from the École des chartes in Paris in 1949, he held several positions in French repositories and became the Doyen de l'Inspection des Archives de France (Dean of the General Inspection of the

French Archives) in 1980, an important role as the Inspection was in charge of advising the director of the Archives de France and participated in writing policies regarding archival activities: control, acquisition, preservation, appraisal, arrangement, cataloguing, access and promotion.[20]

Duchein wrote an impressive number of articles in *La Gazette des archives* and other journals, along with books on archives and archival theory. His contribution to French archival science is crucial, and today his name can be found in the references of numerous Francophone works relating to archives. Beyond the French borders, Michel Duchein took part in technical missions for the United Nations (especially the United Nations Development Program), UNESCO, the Organisation of the American States and the ICA. He has taught or given conference papers about archival studies abroad as well. Additionally, from 1988 he led the ICA Committee on Archival Buildings and Equipment (ICA/CBQ). He took part in several international conferences such as the International Conferences of the Archival Round Table (CITRAs).[21] As mentioned earlier, he was also the editor of the bilingual ICA journal *Archivum*.

Lastly, outside of the archival sphere, Michel Duchein also translated several novels. All these factors made Duchein well placed to write on the translation of archival terminology between English and French, which he did several times in his career.

When Michel Duchein published the 'Tour de Babel' article in 1985, it was not the first time he had written about archival terminology. In 1965, he had published 'A propos de la terminologie archivistique,' ('About archival terminology') a short article in *La Gazette des archives* dealing with the use of archival terms in French,[22] and in the previous issue of the *Gazette* he had reviewed the *Lexicon of Archive Terminology* published by Elsevier a year earlier.[23] In 1985, in 'Les Archives dans la Tour de Babel' Duchein reacted, in a longer article, to the publication of the *Dictionary of Archival Terminology* by the ICA. He justified the length of the article by 'the significance of the volume.'[24] In the introductory paragraphs of this article, Duchein explains that, although the French representative in the committee that compiled the *Dictionary* was François J. Himly, he did have a minor part to play in its elaboration.[25] Two years later, in 1987, Duchein also reviewed AFNOR's *Vocabulaire des archives*.[26] Finally, he reflected on the French words *archives, archivistes* and *archivistique* in a chapter of Jean Favier's 1993 book, *La pratique archivistique française* (*French archival practice*).[27] In the *Encyclopedia of Archival Writers 1515–2015*, Patrice Marcilloux has described Michel Duchein as 'passionate about the problems of archival terminology', adding that 'translating professional terms has been for him a way to reflect on archival concepts as well as an occasion to decry the insufficient systemization of archival vocabulary.'[28]

Although Duchein only published a small number of works on translation and terminology during his career – that is, the two articles from 1965, the 'Tour de Babel' in 1985, the article published in 1987 and a book chapter in 1993 – an analysis of Duchein's bibliography reveals that a great number of his publications were linked to international questions. Yet, to this day, 'La Tour de Babel' remains one of Duchein's most influential articles, with archival scholars quoting it across the world in articles written in French, English, Italian, Spanish, Russian and Czech. These publications range from 1987, two years after 'La Tour de Babel' was issued, to 2019, which shows that Duchein's points still have a degree of relevance today.[29] As the most extensive and

thorough study of the problems of translating archival terminology, 'La Tour de Babel' is an appropriate point of reference for current work in this area.

Summary of the problems identified by Duchein

'La Tour de Babel' is structured in three parts: the first is centred around the *Dictionary of Archival Terminology* with a discussion of the conception of the dictionary and the choice of words included. Then, Duchein examines the main problems he had identified for the translation of archival terminology in a second part. Lastly, he provides concrete examples of problematic terms and the reasons they pose issues in translations. Duchein then analyses the definitions provided in the *Dictionary* for those terms.

On top of the challenges faced by any translator,[30] Duchein identifies three major sources of difficulties for translations of archival terminology: nationally, archivists might not be clear on which word to use in which context, leading to a lack of precision in vernacular terminology. How, then, can a concept be transposed from one language to another if the definitions of words are not clear, even to native speakers? Another problem identified by Duchein is that words might hold a different meaning from one country to another in spite of these countries sharing the same language. This issue, he highlights, is particularly relevant in the case of English. In the case of the *Dictionary of Archival Terminology*, Duchein underlines that American English has often been favoured over other variations. The situation is similar with the French language with a preference given to terminology used in Metropolitan France. The third and last hurdle identified by Duchein is that archives and records are deeply linked to the judicial, governmental and administrative systems of their country. The vocabulary of these key fields is thus likely to permeate each national archival terminology; in some cases, these systems can be highly specific, and the national archival terminology is bound to reflect this.[31]

How can the differences in technical language in English and French cause problems for intercultural communication for archivists and records managers?

In 1916, Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* was published posthumously. It became hugely influential and today Saussure is regarded as 'one of the main thinkers who contributed to establishing the principles of the discipline [of linguistics] as we know it today.'[32] The following quote from Saussure seems to summarise the issue at hand here, which is the problematics of translation of archival terminology: 'If words had the job of representing concepts fixed in advance, one would be able to find exact equivalents for them between one language and another. But this is not the case.'[33]

Concepts fixed in advanced or imprecise terminology

One of the points raised by Duchein is that recordkeepers sharing the same language might not be clear in the first place on what term to use to refer to the same object. The examples he chooses in 'La Tour de Babel' are almost exclusively Francophone ones but the Anglophone recordkeeping world is not devoid of instances where terminology gets blurred around concepts. Over thirty years after Duchein's article, Anne Gilliland, Sue McKemmish and Andrew Lau also mentioned that one factor of confusion for non-

Anglophone recordkeepers is 'the range of definitions for the same terms or concepts as expressed in English.'[34]

The late Eugene Nida, a linguist specialised in translation studies, defined effective translation as follows:

> the translator first analyses the message of the source language into its simplest and structurally clearest forms, transfers it at this level, and then restructures it to the level in the receptor language which is most appropriate for the audience which he intends to reach.[35]

If the source concept is unclear, as Duchein, Gilliland, McKemmish and Lau all suggest, this means that the very first step of the translation process described by Nida is in jeopardy, hence making the translation of imprecise archival terminology fundamentally flawed.

Agreeing upon terminology – words that do not mean the same from one language to another or from one region to another

The *Portail International Archivistique Francophone* (PIAF, Francophone International Archival Portal)[36] introduces its all-French glossary with a specification regarding its content:

> in order to facilitate the comprehension and assimilation of learning resources by the diversity of our audience, we agreed on a basic lexicon that does not seek to exclude the local lexical differences … we have given preference to the words that we all share in this language.[37]

This quote, along with the idea introduced by Duchein of the impact of locality on terminology, shows that terms used by recordkeepers can diverge depending on where they are used. As regards the English language, Duchein wrote:

> It is said that Sir Winston Churchill would state that England and the United States were countries with friendly relationships divided by a common language. In no field is this quip truer than in archival science. So much so that the Dictionary was designed to differentiate, in many cases, definitions from the US and from the UK, and sometimes even from Canada and Australia.[38]

Duchein provides several examples to illustrate this point: one is the term 'record'. Writing in 1985, Duchein analysed the problems of translating this word, but records management had not yet reached the importance it has today, and the problem has thus slightly changed in nature. In 1985, Duchein showed that 'record' could be translated in two ways (current and intermediate versus permanent) and these depended on British or American English. With the passing of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) in the United Kingdom (UK) and of General Data Protection Regulations (2018) by the European Union (EU), records management has greatly developed across both the UK and Europe; 'record' is now more commonly used in the sense understood by Americans (that is, documents in a current or intermediate state of their life cycle instead of historical archives). However, in the UK, repositories for archives are still commonly called 'record office' (for example Liverpool Record Office). In the US, where records management took off earlier than in the UK, the distinction was made sooner, and the difference in meaning is also clearer. As early as 1965, in *The Management of Archives*, Schellenberg wrote that

the terms most often used are 'papers' and 'records,' the former to refer to material of a personal origin and the latter to material of corporate origin. The term 'manuscript,' when used to refer to historical source material, has usually been modified by the adjective 'historical' to distinguish between historical and literary manuscripts.[39]

In the case of the corpus of translations used in my study, this problem did not have much effect as the translations done were from English to French, given that the French can use the word *archives* to translate both English terms. I will elaborate on this point further in the article. However, it would have been a parameter to take into consideration had the translations been from French to English.

Culture and core concepts deriving from culture

In 'La Tour de Babel,' Duchein highlighted the significance of the role played by each country's culture in the creation of a national archival terminology:

> archival science is closely related to the judicial, governmental and administrative systems of each country and ... consequently, archival terminology reflects a whole system of concepts that, by definition, are difficult to transpose from one country to another.[40]

To understand this, one has to go back to what archives and records (or *archives* in French) are. French law defines the word *archives* as

> *archives* are the sum of documents, including data, whatever their conservation place, date, form and format might be, that are produced or received by any person, physical or moral, and any service or public or private organisation in the carrying out of their activities.[41]

This definition from the 2018 edition of the *Code du Patrimoine* underlines the role played by public institutions in the creation of archives. What it also shows is that *archives* in French is a term used to talk both about historical records and current records.

To Francophones, the frontier between the two Anglophone terms, 'archives' and 'records', is thus a blurry one. In theory, for translators the task seems easy enough: in the case of English to French translation, substitute 'archives' or 'records' for *archives* in all cases; when translating from French to English reflect on the place of the document within the life-cycle model and translate accordingly. In practice, the situation is more complicated. The publication of international standards, which are translated in French, have been a factor in encouraging the appearance of a French equivalent for 'record'. The French version of ISO 15489:2016 (Information and Documentation – Records Management; Part 1: Concepts and Principles) for example translates 'records' as *documents d'activité*, but this is not the only possible translation that exists. Viviane Frings-Hessami has compiled a list of translations of the term 'records' which she presented during a talk in Liverpool in July 2019.[42] Apart from *documents d'activité*, possibilities include *documents d'archives*,[43] *documents, archives, archives courantes et intermédiaires, documents à archiver*,[44] *documents archivés*,[45] *documents administratifs, documents organiques, documents engageants*[46] and *enregistrements*. What is striking is not only the diversity of translations, even within one organisation (ISO documents contain at least four different translations of 'records') but also the fact that some of them seem to contradict others: *document à archiver*, which could be translated as 'document to archive' is not the same as *document archivé* ('archived document'). The multiplicity of

translations of 'records', which is a concept developed in Anglophone countries, arises from the lack of historical consensus regarding its exact definition within the Anglophone discourse. As discussed previously, different parts of the world have used the word 'record' in different ways, and although the rise of the records management profession at the end of the twentieth century has provided some sort of agreement on the general definition of records, a debate over the nature of what the term encapsulates remains, as the work of scholars such as Geoffrey Yeo shows.[47]

The corpus used in my study also listed several instances in which an adjective affected the translation of the term. For instance, translating 'historical record' by *document d'activité historique* would make no sense, considering that the first half suggests an active document while the second half suggests an inactive one.

However, it is not clear to what extent each possible translation listed above is used in French, and whether there is a geographical factor in the different uses. In her master's dissertation submitted in 2018, Elodie Bouillon looks at the evolution of French archival terminology from the middle of the twentieth century to today. She devotes a part of her dissertation to 'records management' (for which a French translation exists – *gestion de l'archivage*), in which she concludes: 'In France, the expression [records management], in spite of being formulated in English, is thus preferred to its translations by far.'[48] She gives two hypotheses for the preference of French recordkeepers for 'records management': on one hand, she argues that the English term was the first to appear and might have stuck; on the other, she suggests that it might be an illustration of Francophone recordkeepers' desire to identify with theories developed in the English-speaking world.[49] However, this last hypothesis seems unlikely if one considers the low engagement with the continuum theories developed in Australia. This will be examined in the next section.

The emergence of the digital and new concepts: what impacts for the translation of archival terminology?

Digital recordkeeping

In 1987, as he was reviewing the extent of *Le Vocabulaire des Archives*, Duchein wrote: 'the vocabulary linked to IT in particular is highly complex and in constant evolution and one can wonder whether terms like CD-ROM or OD are really commonly used by archivists.'[50] Thirty years later, Duchein's comment can elicit a few smiles, as optical disks of all kinds have been common in repositories for quite a few years and archives are increasingly born digital. It is nonetheless a striking testimony of how far technology has pushed digital recordkeeping, and its vocabulary.

In recent times, recordkeepers had to engage in important work regarding translation between English and French in the digital field. For example, translation was done for Encoded Archival Description (EAD), which was first developed in the 1990s in the United States, along with Encoded Archival Context (EAC). Both EAD and EAC feature tag libraries. In order to be used by Francophone (and, in particular, French) record-keepers, the EAD tag library had to be translated, along with other elements, as Françoise Bourdon described in a 2004 paper.[51]

With terms such as 'digital bitstream', or 'emulation', it is quite clear that the digital age has created a whole new lexicon within recordkeeping terminology, and over the years, translators had to adapt to this new addition of vocabulary. The change has been

reflected in the tools at the disposal of translators of archival terminology. The MAT database, the latest tool developed, now has entries for terms such as 'binary code', 'bit' and 'byte', 'emulation' or 'SGML' to cite but a few.[52] Some terms linked to digital recordkeeping, however, are shared with other fields, especially computer science. Recordkeepers are thus not the only ones faced with the translation of these words. Three main techniques are used when translating these words from English to French. Some, such as 'binary code' or 'byte', have a full translation into French (here respectively, *code binaire* and *octet*); for some other words, Francophones tend to borrow the English word, whether a translation exists or not. For example, in France today, it is very rare to hear people use the word *courriel* to refer to an email and 'open source' is part of French vocabulary; finally some French words have been calqued on English words with a small modification so that the resulting word might look more French: this is the case of 'hypertext' which becomes *hypertexte* in French.

Overall, the corpus translated has shown that the translation of terms linked to digital recordkeeping was not an issue: computer science is used by such a vast array of disciplines that most words have been added to the dictionary. The challenge appears when words to be translated are very specific to recordkeeping, especially when they are linked to relatively recent concepts.

What space for concepts such as the continuum model and community archives in French terminology?

The French and the Continuum model. The continuum concept was first expressed in the mid-1980s by Jay Atherton in his article 'From Life Cycle to Continuum: Some Thoughts on the Records Management – Archives Relationship,' published in *Archivaria*.[53] Atherton argued that for several reasons, including the growing importance of digital documents, the life cycle model was no longer appropriate for the care of records and archives. In practice, Jay Atherton's new concept led to blurring the lines between what was considered a record and what was considered an archive. When his article was published, there was no equivalent in French for the term 'records'. The *Dictionary*, published the same year by the ICA, proposes to translate 'records' by *archives*. From this, it could be conjectured that the continuum model would be easy to implement in Francophone regions.

Yet, in France, a model based on the life cycle model as set out by American archivists (called *théorie des trois âges* – or theory of the three ages in English) is still in place today. In the 2012 version of their *Abrégé d'archivistique*,[54] a manual detailing how the profession works in France, the *Association des archivistes français* (AAF, Association of French Archivists), dedicates part of a chapter to the life cycle of documents (II.1.2). Although the AAF then proceeds to underline the impact of the digital environment on the model, they do not suggest any alternative:

> The digital environment has disrupted the theory of the three ages of the archives: the moment archives must be dealt with has been radically pushed back. The document to archive must be taken care of in an appropriate system as early as validation … or even as early as creation; this cannot be postponed.[55]

Surprisingly, although the problem is the same as the one picked up by Atherton, there is no mention of the continuum model anywhere in this chapter.

Following Atherton's article, Australian scholars at Monash University in Melbourne took the concept of the continuum on board and developed it, most notably Frank Upward who designed a visual model for it (Figure 1).

More recently, Viviane Frings-Hessami, who is Belgian Australian, has been researching why the Francophone communities did not embrace the continuum ideas. She has published two articles in French about the continuum, which presented her preliminary findings, one in a Swiss journal, and a shorter one in *Archivistes!*, a magazine published by the AAF for its members. This last article acts as an introduction to the continuum concept and was published in the News section. In a paper given on 11 July 2019 in Liverpool, Frings-Hessami stated that she was quite surprised to find the article in this section as 'the records continuum is not new.'[56]

In her research, Frings-Hessami aims at identifying the causes of the lack of knowledge about continuum theories in the Francophone sphere. She has underlined four main obstacles: the lack of literature in French about the continuum and of authors who identify with these theories outside Anglophone countries, along with the fact that the sources that do exist can be hard to understand as they can use complex language, and also problems of translation.[57] In her talk in Liverpool, Frings-Hessami expanded on the issue of translation explaining that the visual model developed by Upward was
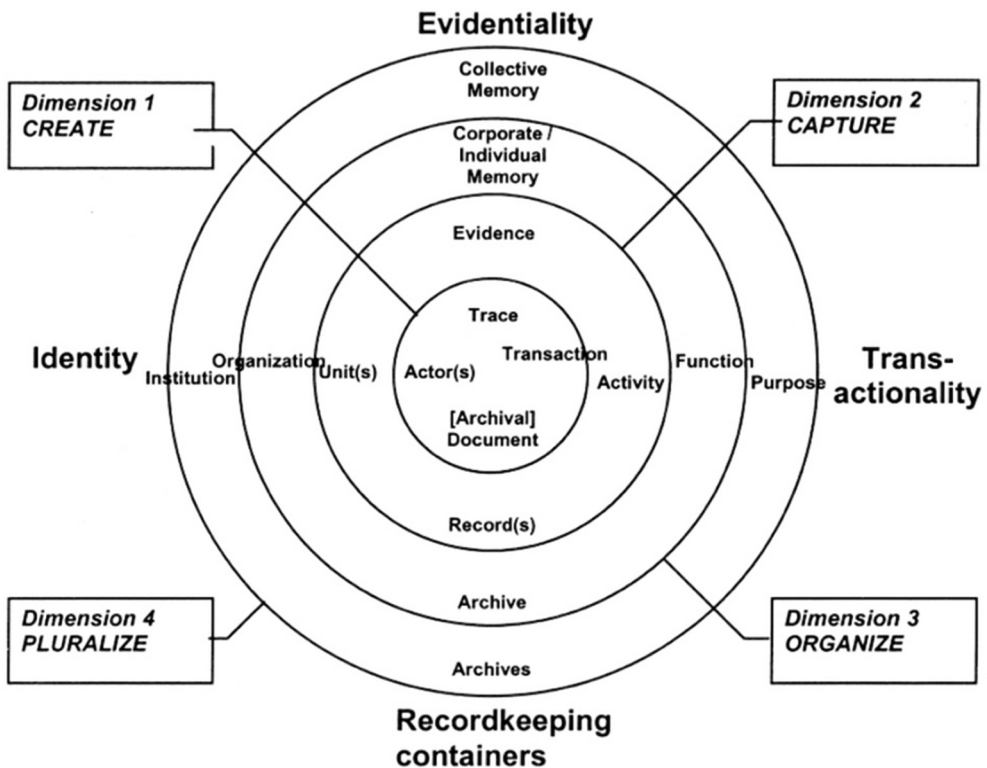

Figure 1. The Records Continuum model developed by Frank Upward. Frank Upward, 'Modelling the Continuum as a Paradigm Shift in Recordkeeping and Archiving Processes, and Beyond – A Personal Reflection', *Records Management Journal*, vol. 10 no. 3, 2000, p. 123.

a challenge to translate for her, even though she was a Francophone scholar who had been working on the continuum for several years.

According to her, some labels on the models were particularly hard to translate, especially the recordkeeping containers axis (see Figure 2). This is not very surprising as the original labels in this axis are 'archival document,' 'record,' 'archive' and 'archives.' In French, three of these words can be translated by *archives*. From here stems a difficulty in making the distinction between the different layers of the model on this axis. In her study, based on interviews with French record-keepers and archivists, Frings-Hessami has also identified difficulties linked to the transactionality axis, and in particular with the notion of transaction which did not seem to be understood in relation to record-making in France. There is no explanation for this yet as the English word and its translation are cognates.[58]

Community archives. Another marked development in archival science since Duchein's article is the growth of community archives. A community comprises people that identify themselves as sharing the same values, interests, ideologies, culture or localities. Community archives are archives created by and that relate to specific communities of people. They aim at bridging the gaps that exist in traditional archives when it comes to representation of certain attributes (for example ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or class). In an article published in 2007, Andrew Flinn suggests that
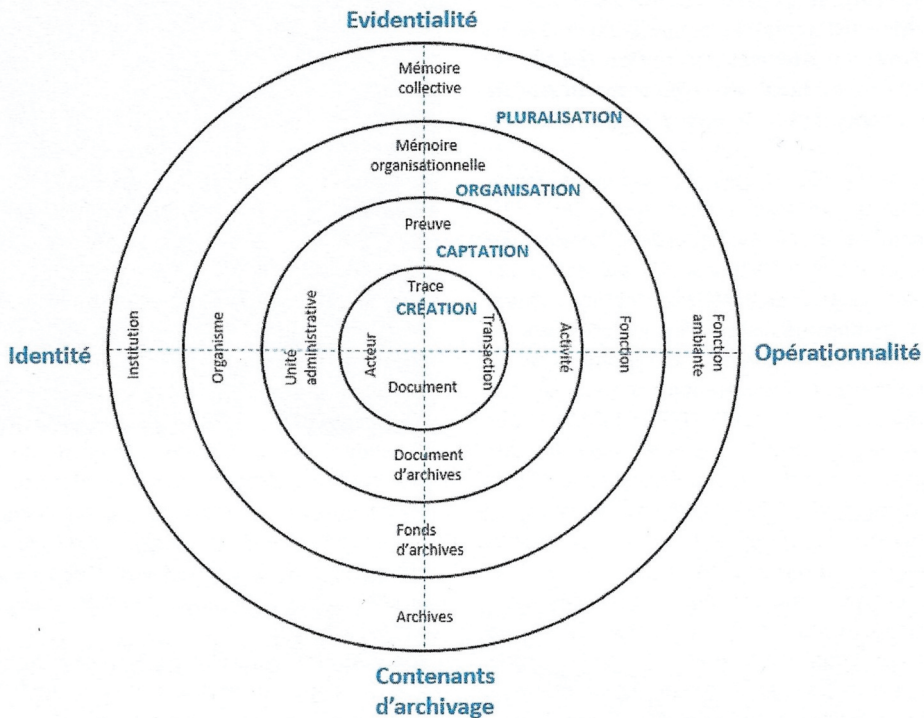

Figure 2. Translation of Upward's continuum model by Viviane Frings-Hessami. Viviane Frings-Hessami, 'Le records continuum et la tradition archivistique australienne', *Archivistes!*, no. 129, 2019, p. 8.

community archives started to be established during the 1980s, although a couple of examples have earlier origins, with the movement really taking off in the early years of the twenty-first century.[59] Today, the space occupied by community archives in the curriculum of archive courses and in archive journals, along with their growing number, indicate that community archives are a force to be reckoned with, at least in the Anglophone sphere.

When it comes to community archives in France, it is a very different story. In *Les ego-archives*, Patrice Marcilloux writes:

> It is easily understandable that the political tradition of the country, the relationship to the state and to regional authority that are in place, as well as the deep way in which social relations are steeped in secular traditions, prevent the apparition of community archives similar to Anglo-Saxon ones. However, it would be wrong to pretend that this type of question is not considered and that the unity of the French archival system is not acutely challenged by new ways and means.[60]

Community archives in France are still rare, and finding sources about community archives in the French language is challenging. Despite this, initiatives to set up some community archives in France do exist and, in the past, some have been particularly public, having ended up in the law courts. The French *Pays Basque* has been a place of territorial claims for a long time. In France, archives are decentralised and organised according to territorial divisions: Archives Nationales/Régionales/Départementales/Communales … In 1999, a group called Démos (Démocratie pour le Pays Basque) walked out of the Archives départementales des Pyrénées Atlantiques in Pau with two key registers for Basque history. Their high impact operation led to symbolic fines but mostly to the creation of the Pôle d'archives de Bayonne et du Pays basque (the Bayonne and Basque Country Archive Centre), which opened on 14 June 2010 in Bayonne.[61] The Basque example is one of the most successful and well-known instances of the creation of a community archive in France. The association Collectif Archives LGBTQI, which was formed in 2018, may provide another example in the future, but is yet to become a tangible reality.[62]

In terms of translation of terminology, the fact that there is a clear gap due to the near absence of community archives per say in France and the lack of literature in French on the subject, creates a difficulty for translators. Not only must the translator find ways to translate words and concepts related to community archives, but they must also make sure that the translation of the concepts will make sense for a Francophone reader.

Terminology emanating from these concepts proved to be the most challenging phrases to translate in my work on the *Comma* corpus. One example proved to be a particular problem, as there was no records of previous translations into French to be found of the expression 'representational belonging' as used in the following sentence: 'These initiatives foster what Michelle Caswell, Marika Cifor, and Mario Ramirez have termed "representational belonging" for students of color at predominately white institutions.'[63] In the presence of terms that have been coined to designate a concept, the first step for translators is to check if this term has been translated before. If it has not, a translator has two choices: either find a way to translate, especially if the original cannot make sense for a speaker of the other language, or leave it as it is if the expression is transparent enough in the targeted language. 'Representational belonging'[64] would not be

self-explanatory for a French-speaking person; translation had to be provided. I looked through Francophone databases (for example Persée) for any material that would cite Caswell, Cifor and Ramirez, the English words themselves, or any material relating to community archives. The absence of tangible results highlighted a clear difference between the Anglophone archival community and the Francophone one. Because of the existing gap, the only solution left was to rely on translation techniques to get the meaning across. After considering various synonyms and syntax interchanges, the final translation was as follows: 'Ces initiatives corroborent, pour les étudiants de couleur des institutions majoritairement blanches, ce que Michelle Caswell, Marika Cifor et Mario Ramirez ont appelé "l'appartenance représentative".' The association between the two words is very rare in French, but not unheard of. However, despite going back to the databases and making a new search with this term, I found no instance of it being used in an archival context. I decided to keep this translation nonetheless as there were a few records of it being used in other fields.

The barriers to the translation of archival terminology, and thus to international communication are numerous, with different origins: from local or cultural disparities to the emergence of new concepts. In order to bring down those barriers, recordkeepers have worked to produce lexical tools to facilitate translation and communication.

Development of tools to bridge the gaps: from the Elsevier Lexicon to MAT

While the ICA has designed, compiled and arranged most of the following tools, they differ in their format, layout, extent and content. These differences are the product of time, technological development and more international inclusivity – especially as far as the number of languages included is concerned. This section presents the tools that support the translation of archival terminology from English to French. It will analyse each tool individually before undertaking a comparative analysis in order to identify their apparent strengths and weaknesses.

Description of the tools

Elsevier's Lexicon of Archive Terminology (1964)

A result of the proceedings of the Second International Congress on Archives held in 1953,[65] the first tool designed for the translation of archival terminology was the *Lexicon of Archival Terminology*, issued by the publishing company Elsevier in 1964 but commissioned by the ICA. The *Lexicon* was the result of a collaboration between the world of archives and the world of translation. It was made under the editorship of the late Jean Herbert, a French professor who used to work as an accredited translator for the League of Nations[66] and as Chief Interpreter to the United Nations.[67] The title page of the *Lexicon* states that it was 'compiled and arranged on a systematic basis by a committee of the International Council on Archives.'[68] This committee was composed of a total of eight members: Heinrich-Otto Meisner (East Germany), Peter Walne (England), Marcel Baudot and Robert-Henri Bautier (France), Herman Meinart (Germany), Antonino Lombardo (Italy) and Miguel Bordonau (Spain), along with Herman Hardenberg (the Netherlands) who led the committee.[69] The different members represent all the languages contained in the *Lexicon*: English, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Dutch.

The *Lexicon* is eighty-three pages long, covering a hundred and seventy-five entries. It is primarily written in French and organised around six thematic categories: vocabulary to describe documents, structures, tools, conservation, technical operations, usage and reproduction. The first category, on documents, is then further divided in six subcategories. For each word, a short definition is given in French and a single translation in the other five languages is provided (without any definition in those languages, apart from a few exceptions). Each word is assigned a number and an index in alphabetical order is available at the end of the Lexicon in each language to make the search for words easier.

The ICA Dictionary of Archival Terminology (1984)

In 1984, a new tool was published by the ICA, with the aim of replacing the *Lexicon of Archival Terminology*. The *Dictionary of Archival Terminology/Dictionnaire de terminologie archivistique* was the product of the work done by an ICA working party formed in 1977. The contributors to the *Dictionary* were Dr Eric Ketelaar (Dutch), Mr Peter Walne (English – UK), Mr Frank B. Evans (English – USA), Mr François-J. Himly (French), Dr Eckhart G. Franz (German), Dr Elio Lodolini (Italian), Mr Filipp Ivanovich Dolgih (Russian), Mr Arago and Mrs Concepción Contel Barea (Spanish). One can notice that the contributors changed almost entirely between the *Lexicon* and the *Dictionary of Archival Terminology* as only Peter Walne remained present in the second committee.

This tool was more extensive than the previous one: 503 entries are detailed in over 200 pages and Russian was added to the list of languages available. The *Dictionary* is organised in alphabetical order around the English terminology but indexes in the six other languages and a reference number for each word makes searches easy. The reference numbers are attributed according to the English alphabetical order (for example in the French index, the fifth word in the alphabetical order, *acidité* [pH value], bears the number 349). For each word, a short definition is given in English and in French (even where no French translation of the term is given); for the five other languages, only the translation of the term is provided.

AFNOR's Vocabulaire des archives (1986)

In 1986, the Association française de Normalisation (AFNOR) issued a book entitled *Vocabulaire des archives: archivistique et diplomatique contemporaines*. The difference between this tool and its predecessors is that it was not primarily designed for translation purposes; rather, its goal was to standardise the terms used by French-speaking record-keepers. However, most of the entries also offer an English translation. The project was directed by Bruno Delmas, a French archivist and historian, and offers around 650 definitions, most of which relate to the field of diplomatics. The book itself can be divided into three parts. The first and most substantial one lists the French words relating to the fields of archives and diplomatics in alphabetical order. Each word is followed by a definition in French, and some of them also have one or two matching terms in English. The second part is a thematic index of all the words defined in the book. The themes are: general terms, archival documents (formal and physical description, elaboration and tradition, individual and private documents, administration and management, public and state documents, banking and business documents, finance and accounting documents, technical and scientific documents, religious documents), archival institutions, archival processes (collecting and acquisition, arrangement and appraisal, analysis

and inventory, research and communication), and conservation and buildings. Finally, the last part lists the terms in English in alphabetical order and provides a French translation for each in a separate column.

Delmas cited Duchein's work, and especially his two articles in *La Gazette des archives* from 1965 and 1985,[70] as well as ISO 5127 (Information and Documentation – Foundation and Vocabulary) as the biggest influences behind this tool. In 1965, Duchein had underlined that there was an issue with the way French archivists used technical terms.[71] Delmas reminded readers, in the introduction to the *Vocabulaire des archives*, that at the end of his short 1965 article, Duchein had called for the publication of a French glossary of archival terminology. Delmas presents the *Vocabulaire* as a late answer to that call: 'His article ended with a call for the publication of a French glossary of "proper usage" of archival terminology, a call which has not really been heard until today.'[72] Indeed, although the 1964 *Lexicon* provided definitions in French, it cannot strictly speaking be considered as a French glossary.

ICA's MAT database (2012- ...)

After several reprints of the *Dictionary*, a new tool was designed in the early 2010s. The project, entitled *Multilingual Archival Terminology* (MAT), was launched by the ICA's Section for Archival Education (SAE) but it was also based on the work of InterPARES, a long-running international research programme. The goals of InterPARES, as stated on its website are

> to produce frameworks that will support the development of integrated and consistent local, national and international networks of policies, procedures, regulations, standards and legislation concerning digital records entrusted to the Internet, to ensure public trust grounded on evidence of good governance, and a persistent digital memory.[73]

In a lecture entitled 'Jenkinson Disrupted? The InterPARES Journey' given on 16 May 2019 at University College London, Professor Luciana Duranti, director of the InterPARES programme, explained that InterPARES developed a Terminology Database consisting in a glossary, a dictionary and three ontologies. According to her, the glossary 'became the ICA *Multilingual Archival Terminology* database.'[74]

The MAT project is led by three scholars from the University of British Columbia (Canada) and directed by Luciana Duranti. MAT is an online database[75] that was launched in 2012 with 320 English terms translated in other languages.[76] Because people can sign up to contribute to MAT, this database cannot be considered to have a definitive version and has to be monitored for updates. As of 2020, it is searchable in 24 languages, although the number of words available varies from one language to another, and the English version has been enriched to reach 328 entries. The French language version currently lists 325 terms. MAT is accessible through its own URL but also through the homepage of the University of British Columbia's Centre for the International Study of Contemporary Records and Archives (CISCRA) as CISCRA hosts the database,[77] and the ICA website, which additionally contains some literature about the genesis of the project and a list of administrators for the database. The listed researchers/advisors for English are Corinne Rogers, Adrian Cunningham, Richard Pearce Moses and Elizabeth Shepherd, and for French: Valerie Léveillé. However, their exact role is unclear.[78]

Comparative study: strengths and weaknesses

Some statistical data regarding the tools

Although all of these tools are designed with the same objective, that is, providing definitions and foreign equivalents to technical terminology relating to archives and records, they do so in different ways as the descriptions detailed above have shown, and with a different scope. The following graphs (Figures 3–7) were compiled in order to give a visual representation to some quantitative data. As such, they are not reflective of the quality of the translations provided by each tool. The method used to compile these statistics consisted in a general count of the number of entries before examining whether or not the entry provided a translation either to English (*Lexicon, Vocabulaire des archives*) or to French (*Dictionary of Archival Terminology, Multilingual Archival Terminology*).

The tool that presents the largest collection of words in a single language is the 1986 *Vocabulaire des archives* (with a total of 674 entries). It also gives the highest number of translated words. On the other hand, Elsevier's *Lexicon* is the least extensive tool (175 words), which is to be expected as it was the first formal translation help for archivists.

One surprising aspect that this histogram reveals is that although from 1964 to 1986 there was a clear multiplication of entries (the *Vocabulaire* has nearly four times as many entries as the *Lexicon*), the last tool, MAT, which is much more recent, records nearly half as many entries as the previous tool. MAT and its predecessor, the *Dictionary*, both products of the International Council on Archives, provide translation from English to French and numerous entries in the MAT database quote the *Dictionary*. It is therefore surprising that MAT should be more limited in its scope than the *Dictionary*. Indeed, with sources containing abundant terminology such as the *Dictionary* or the *InterPARES*
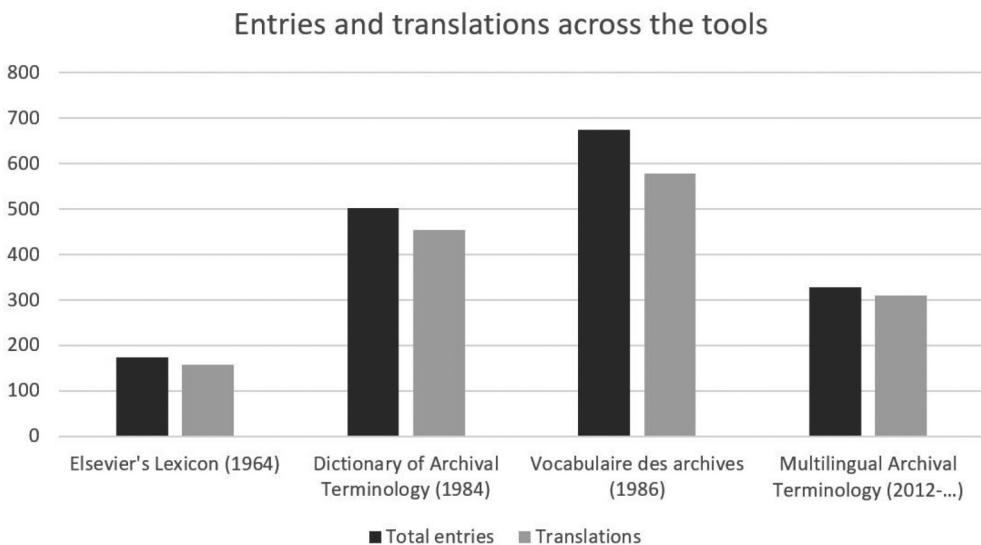

Figure 3. Comparison of the number of total terms and number of matching translations in the *Lexicon of Archive Terminology*, the *Dictionary of Archival Terminology*, the *Vocabulaire des Archives* and the *Multilingual Archival Terminology Database* as of July 2019.

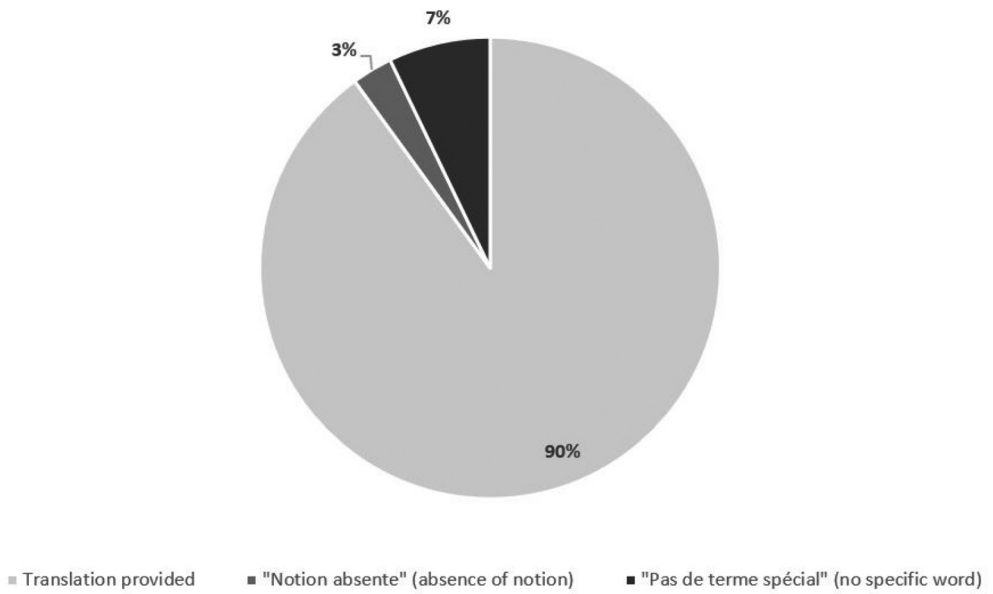## English translations in Elsevier's *Lexicon of Archive Terminology* (1964)

■ Translation provided   ■ "Notion absente" (absence of notion)   ■ "Pas de terme spécial" (no specific word)

Figure 4. Proportion of words translated in the *Lexicon of Archive Terminology*.

French translations in the *Dictionary of Archival Terminology* (1984)
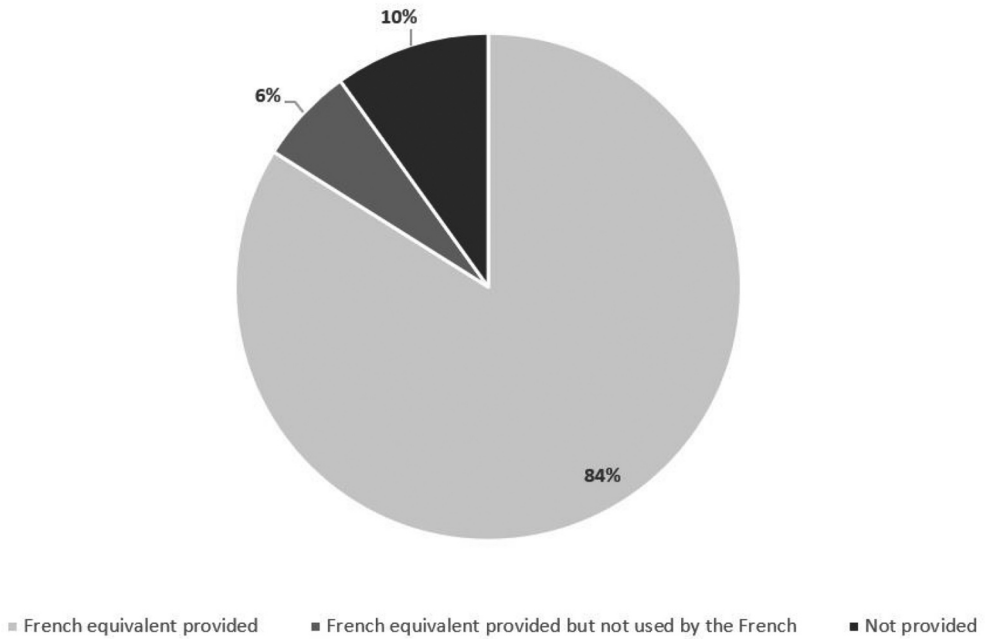

■ French equivalent provided   ■ French equivalent provided but not used by the French   ■ Not provided

Figure 5. Proportion of words translated in the *Dictionary of Archival Terminology*.

Translations from French to English in *Vocabulaire des Archives,* AFNOR (1986)
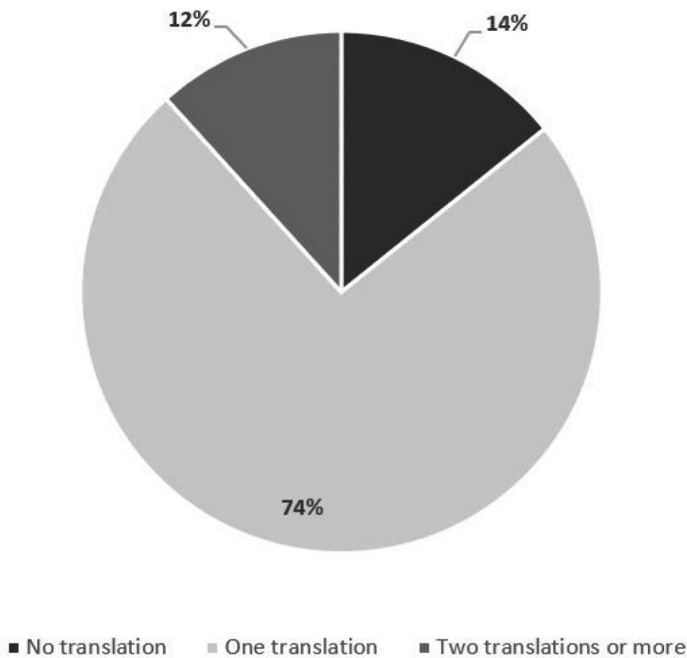
Figure 6. Proportion of words translated in the *Vocabulaire des Archives.*

Glossary, one would have expected MAT to be the most extensive tool developed yet. This is to some extent true, as MAT encompasses more languages than any previous tool. However, facts differ when focusing only on French and English.

A more in-depth study of the proportion of translations, illustrated in the four pie charts (Figures 4–7), reveals more data about the tools analysed. For all four tools, translations are provided in the great majority of cases. MAT provides a French equivalent in 95% of cases, the *Dictionary* in 90% of cases, the same percentage as the *Lexicon* which gives an English equivalent for 90% of entries as well. Unsurprisingly, the *Vocabulaire des Archives* has the lowest rate (although still a high one) at 85%; one must nevertheless remember that translation is not the main objective of this tool.

These statistics underline other noteworthy aspects of the translations given by the tools. In the *Dictionary of Archival Terminology*, for 6% of the words, although a translation is suggested, the French equivalent is in square brackets, which indicates that it is not a term used by Francophones. This enables the reader to make a distinction in the translations provided by the *Dictionary*. In the same way, there is a distinction made in the reasons for the absence of equivalents in the *Lexicon*. Thereby, the reader is able to distinguish between an absence of a notion in English and the lack of a specific word; in some case, lack of a specific word might indeed mean that an umbrella term might be used in lieu of a more specific word in the way the French language does.
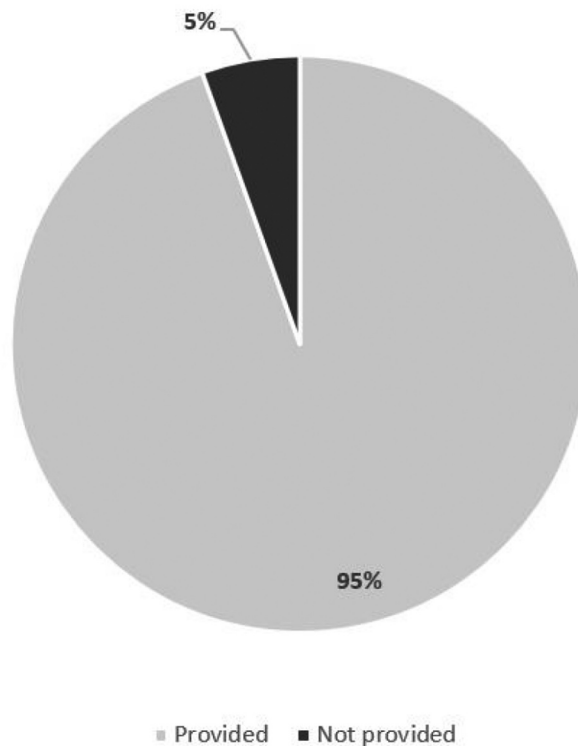
English to French terminology in the MAT database (2019)

5%

95%

▪ Provided ▪ Not provided

Figure 7. Proportion of words translated in the *Multilingual Archival Terminology Database* as of 7 July 2019.

Reviews, reception, impact and legacy

While the previous part of this analysis was concerned with quantitative data about the tools, numbers do not indicate the quality of their content nor their usefulness to the professionals for whom they were designed. By studying the reviews written about the tools, and by evaluating the impact they had, and most notably their legacy, it is possible to draw a more qualitative picture of the four tools.

The cover of the *Lexicon of Archive Terminology* states that it was 'the first publication to present archival terms in more than one language.'[79] As a cornerstone for archival translation, its importance to the field cannot be understated. It had a long-lasting impact, as no other tool was issued in the next twenty years. In 'Les Archives dans la Tour de Babel,' as he introduced the *Dictionary of Archival Terminology*, Duchein underlined that 'the little Lexicon published by Elsevier (1964) ... has for a long time been a companion to archivists.'[80] Additionally, the choice of the word 'companion' denotes some level of affection for the *Lexicon* on Duchein's part.

Further than being the first translation tool developed for archival terminology, the *Lexicon* records the first instance of the definition of archives in French (word number 90) which would later serve as the basis for article L211-1 in the French *Code du patrimoine* that defines in law what archives are. Although the *Code du patrimoine* was

not compiled before 2004, its definition draws on the one that was contained in the law on archives 79–18, passed on 3 January 1979. This law was the first one to enshrine the definition of archives into French law. Commenting on law 79–18 in an article published in 1980, Jean Laveissière, a French professor of law, wrote 'as paradoxical as it might seem, until now there was no text to provide an official and current definition of what an archive document is. Such a definition would only appear in manuals of archival science.'[81] Laveissière references one manual in particular: the *Manuel d'archivistique*, published for the first time in 1970 and introduced by Guy Duboscq and Robert-Henri Bautier, who participated in the Committee who compiled the Elsevier *Lexicon*. Both legal texts bear striking similarities to the definition provided by the *Lexicon*.

Duchein, who reviewed the *Lexicon*, also gave accounts in *La Gazette des archives* of both AFNOR's *Vocabulaire des archives* and the *Dictionary of Archive Terminology*, the 'Tour de Babel' article acting as a review of the ICA tool. In another short article from 1986, Duchein was enthusiastic about the AFNOR publication, stating that 'any archivist dealing with contemporary holdings must absolutely own a copy of this little book.'[82] His praise noted the extensive vocabulary provided, the inclusion of diplomatics alongside archives and the cheap price of the volume.

Of all four tools listed, Duchein reviewed three. The last one, MAT, has to this date barely been reviewed. Unfortunately (and quite ironically considering the subject of this paper), although there is one article that deals with MAT, published in 2019 by Amany Mohamed, it was not possible for me to access the content, which is written in Arabic. Online translation tools have proved insufficient at rendering the content in English or French, and the abstract alone does not provide detailed information on Mohamed's opinions of the database. The current lack of response to MAT is surprising and triggers a question as to the scope of its use.

MAT put to the test: Strengths and weaknesses of the database

Although MAT features twenty-four languages (seventeen more than the *Dictionary*, a considerable addition), only translations from English to French were used in this study. These are available in the English section by clicking on an entry term and scrolling under the definition provided to see the different languages and the equivalents suggested. Let us take as an example the term 'record', of which the translation into French can be problematic (Figure 8).

For each word, MAT displays one or several definitions, from other trusted sources: ISO standards, but also the *Dictionary of Archival Terminology*, glossaries from diverse archives and records associations (for example ARMA International), the *InterPARES glossary* or scholarly works. For 'record' MAT lists nine definitions – not all of them followed by translations. Those given for the French language: are shown in Figure 9.

While three of these translations feature in the possibilities identified by Viviane Frings-Hessami, the rest are different and could reflect the polysemy of the word 'record' mentioned earlier. More surprisingly, MAT's options do not include *document d'activité*, which is the translation in the current French version of ISO 15489 (ISO 15489:2016). This might be because the definition given in MAT is taken from ISO 15489:2001, but this only shows that MAT needs to be updated. As a comparison, the first entry for 'archives' is an undated quotation from the University of British Columbia School of

Figure 8. 'Record' in MAT, top of the page.

Figure 9. French translations of 'Record' in MAT.

Library, Archival and Information Studies' Select List of Archival Terminology. The translations of the term 'archives' into French are shown in Figure 10.

These translations are exactly the same as the ones for 'record.' This can be explained by the fact that the French *archives* (which does not feature in either of the translation lists for 'archives' or 'record' in MAT!) covers both records and archives in French. Further exploration into MAT reveals that the entry for 'document' again lists the exact same translations.[83] The main issue in this case is the lack of context around the translation suggestions to avoid mixing different possible meanings.

However, the repetition of translation lists seems to be a common phenomenon in MAT as the entries for 'active record' and 'inactive record' show (Figures 11 and 12).

Figure 10. French translations of 'Archives' in MAT.

French: archives courantes(fr), archives courantes(fr), archives intermédiaires(fr), archives intermédiaires(fr), déplacement, dépôt(fr), document actif(fr), document inactif(fr), document semi-actifs(fr),

Figure 11. French translations of 'Active record' in MAT.

French: archives courantes(fr), archives courantes(fr), archives intermédiaires(fr), archives intermédiaires(fr), déplacement, dépôt(fr), document actif(fr), document inactif(fr), document semi-actifs(fr),

Figure 12. French translations of 'Inactive record' in MAT.

Again, the lists are similar word for word. However, here, it is much more problematic as 'active record' and 'inactive record' are antonyms. This can lead not only to severe confusion but also to misinterpretations in the translation process and to potentially serious consequences, depending on what the translations are used for.

Through its system of similar lists of translation, the database requires its user to be comfortable enough with both languages to discern which term they should pick from the lists, but such users are not those who need a translation database the most. Using MAT to translate an abstract for *Comma* proved to be impractical: with confusing blocks of terms to choose from cautiously, and lack of up-to-date translations, the database was not of much help.

In spite of this pessimistic conclusion, there are considerable strengths to MAT. The large number of languages included and their diversity show that access to translations of archival terminology has been facilitated in comparison with the time at which Duchein wrote 'Les Archives dans la Tour de Babel.' These could be expanded even further considering the fact that MAT is an open source database. Anyone can add and edit terms in MAT if they log in. The possibilities offered by MAT are therefore very interesting, and its online format offers opportunities to create a powerful tool for the translation of archival terminology that paper formats just could not offer.

Adequacy of current tools regarding the translation of archival terminology from English to French

The tools developed since 1965 have taken several forms, from paper to online databases, with a growing range of overall entries. Some, like the 1965 *Lexicon*, have had an impact outside recordkeeping. Others, like the 1986 *Vocabulaire*, have helped to define and fix a national archival terminology. The 1985 *Dictionary of Archival Terminology* and the MAT database that has been accessible since 2012 have both considerably expanded the scope of translations of archival terminology.

Although MAT is a promising initiative that has considerably widened possibilities for recordkeepers to translate archival terminology, it has nonetheless been proven to have

severe limitations when used to translate from English to French. The addition of seventeen languages compared to the *Dictionary of Archival Terminology*, the previous tool developed by the ICA, is considerable progress and will doubtlessly help to broaden international communication. The variety of the languages added is in itself worth noticing, with the addition of translations in Belarusian and Farsi, for instance.

MAT being an open source database, collaboration is available through a login. Open source databases have the advantage that anyone can contribute. Nevertheless, the translations provided by MAT from English to French come in blocks of words that unfortunately do not always match. The problem could be fixed if a distinction was added between translations and related words to those translations. However, since each entry can list several definitions, with translations for each, this could result in a cluttered page. Still, in the current version of MAT, related words can create not only another form of confusion but can also lead to misinterpretation, which is a more serious problem.

It is quite worrying that while I was working on translating *Comma* abstracts, I came to use MAT, the most up-to-date tool created specifically for the translation of archival terminology, with caution. Instead, I found the *Dictionary of Archival Terminology* and even, to some extent, Elsevier's *Lexicon* to be more accurate and clearer; other tools, which have not been designed with archival terminology in mind, were just as useful as the *Dictionary*, and MAT simply did not compare with these.

Terminology evolves rapidly thanks to the research that is carried out across the globe in archival science and related fields such as IT. Effective tools thus need to be up-to-date and not decades old. None of the tools studied have been helpful in the translation of 'representational belonging.' It would be particularly useful to see MAT updated with new terms such as these (though 'representational belonging' was coined several years ago).

Conclusion

Over thirty years ago, Michel Duchein had high hopes (yet realistic expectations regarding its feasibility) for a tool that would enable archivists to capture the different facets of archival terminology, including the impact of national culture, history and administration; a tool that would reflect the variety of forms of a same language; a tool that would enable archivists across the globe to understand each other without stumbling over terminology. The tools designed in the twentieth century, limited by their paper format, simply could not achieve Duchein's vision. MAT has all the qualities to become this tool, but does not currently reach this goal. With extensive revisions on the accuracy and layout of the translations provided, there is no doubt that MAT could become a reliable, effective and highly useful tool for recordkeepers.

There is still a long way to a proper archival Tower of Babel. In many ways, we stand today in a situation very similar to the one described by Michel Duchein in 1985: issues identified are similar to the ones he described; local and cultural disparities remain problematic today, as recent works around the term 'record' show. New technologies and new concepts, such as the continuum model and community archives, have also brought their share of new challenges to overcome for archival translation. However, contrary to 1985, the subjects of international differences both in archival science and linguistics are currently experiencing a strong resurgence in interest. Hopefully this will have an impact on the situation, and

especially trigger the adaptation of the current tools to better fit their purpose. Only then might we get closer to attaining what Duchein called 'l'avènement d'un espéranto archivistique' ('the advent of an archival Esperanto').[84]

Notes

1. 'Si la France est absente des groupes de travail internationaux sur les outils et la normalisation, elle ne peut faire valoir son point de vue et ses besoins de préservation', VITAM, @ProgVitam, Twitter, 5 April 2019, available at <*https://twitter.com/ProgVitam/status/1114065616703455232*>, accessed 30 May 2020.
2. VITAM programme presentation, available at <*http://www.programmevitam.fr/pages/english/pres_english/*>, accessed 30 May 2020.
3. Paul Delsalle and Margaret Ruth Procter, *A History of Archival Practice*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2017, p. ix.
4. International Council on Archives Website, 'Our History', available at <*https://www.ica.org/en/international-council-archives-0/ica-70-years-of-international-influence-timeline*>, accessed 16 May 2020.
5. International Council on Archives, 'Proceedings of the 2nd International Congress on Archives, The Hague, 1953', *Archivum*, vol. 3, 1953.
6. International Council on Archives Website, International Council on Archives Language Policy, available at <*https://www.ica.org/en/international-council-archives-language-policy*>, accessed 16 May 2020.
7. *Archivum* is a former name of the journal published by the ICA, today called *Comma*. International Council on Archives Website, 'Glossary of terms often used in ICA', available at <*https://www.ica.org/en/glossary-terms-often-used-ica*>, accessed 30 May 2020.
8. Anne Gilliland, Sue McKemmish and Andrew Lau (eds), *Research in the Archival Multiverse*, Monash University Publishing, Clayton, Victoria, 2017, p. 27.
9. Amany Mohamed, 'International Trends in Standardizing Archival Terminology: The Multilingual Archival Terminology (MAT) as a Model', *Comma*, vol. 2017 no. 2, 2019, pp. 135–61.
10. Archival Discourses (International Intellectual History of Archival Studies Official Website), 'Call for Papers, Archival Science: Special Issue on Archival Thinking: Genealogies and Archaeologies', available at <*https://archivaldiscourses.org/activities-and-outputs/*>, accessed 3 May 2020.
11. Archival Discourses, 'About', <*https://archivaldiscourses.org/about/*>, accessed 3 May 2020.
12. ibid.
13. Jean Herbert (ed.), *Elsevier's Lexicon of Archive Terminology*, Elsevier, Amsterdam and London, New York, 1964.
14. Peter Walne and Frank Bernard Evans (ed.), *Dictionary of Archival Terminology – Dictionnaire de Terminologie Archivistique: English and French, with Equivalents in Dutch, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish*, International Council on Archives, München, 1984.
15. Bruno Delmas (ed.), *Vocabulaire Des Archives: Archivistique et Diplomatique Contemporaines* (*Vocabulary of Archives: Contemporary Archival Science and Diplomatics*), AFNOR, 1986.
16. International Council on Archives, 'Multilingual Archival Terminology', available at <*https://www.ica.org/en/online-resource-centre/multilingual-archival-terminology*>, accessed 7 June 2020.
17. ibid.
18. Natália Bolfarini Tognoli, José Augusto Chaves Guimarães and Gilberto Gomes Cândido, 'The terminological dimension of provenance description in the Multilingual Archival Terminology – ICA: Some translation problems', *AIDAinformazioni*, vol. 34, no. 1–2, June 2016, pp. 117–25.

19. A distinction is made with French overseas territories and other Francophone countries, as linguistic variations can occur.

20. Description of the fonds generated by the Inspection générale des Archives de France on the France Archives catalogue, available at <*https://francearchives.fr/findingaid/2286ebf629b cea87f5773a3017f83ee931ce4b30*>, accessed 5 June 2020.

21. Association des archivistes français, 'Michel Duchein, Biographie professionnelle' ('Michel Duchein, Professional Biography'), *Etudes d'Archivistique 1957–1992*, Association des Archivistes Français, Paris, 1992, p. 203.

22. Michel Duchein, 'A propos de la terminologie archivistique' ('About archival terminology'), *La Gazette des archives*, no. 50, 1965, pp. 157–8.

23. Michel Duchein, 'Lexicon of Archive Terminology', *La Gazette des archives*, no. 49, 1965, pp. 102–3.

24. Michel Duchein, 'Les Archives dans la Tour de Babel: Problèmes de terminologie archivistique internationale' ('Archives in the Tower of Babel: Problems of international archival terminology'), *La Gazette des archives*, no. 129, 1985, p. 103.

25. ibid.

26. Michel Duchein, 'Vocabulaire des archives. Archivistique et diplomatique contemporaines, 1986. Les dossiers de la normalisation' ('Archival vocabulary, Contemporary archival science and diplomatics. Standardisation files'), *La Gazette des archives*, no. 136, 1987, p. 90.

27. Michel Duchein, 'Archives, archivistes, archivistique: Définitions et problématiques' ('Archives, archivists, archivistics: Definitions and problems'), in Jean Favier (ed.), *La pratique archivistique française (French archival practice)*, Archives Nationales, Paris, 1993, pp. 19–39.

28. Patrice Marcilloux, 'Michel Duchein', in Luciana Duranti, and Patricia C Franks (eds), *Encyclopedia of Archival Writers, 1515–2015*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, Maryland, 2019, p. 189.

29. Google scholar references for Michel Duchein's 'La Tour de Babel: Problèmes de terminologie archivistique internationale' (1985), available at <*https://scholar.google.com/scholar? start=0&hl=fr&as_sdt=0,5&sciodt=0,5&cites=8174846027779098160&scipsc*>, accessed 5 June 2020.

30. Translators often have to work from a foreign language and translate into their mother tongue. Because of this, they need to take extra caution regarding the content of any text, either explicit or implicit. Other common challenges include adaptation of syntax and tone rendition.

31. Duchein, 'Les Archives dans la Tour de Babel'.

32. Carol Sanders, 'Introduction: Saussure today', in Carol Sanders (ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Saussure*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, p. 1.

33. 'Si les mots étaient chargés de représenter des concepts donnés d'avance, ils auraient chacun, d'une langue à l'autre, des correspondants exacts pour le sens; or il n'en est pas ainsi'. Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, translation by Roy Harris, Bloomsbury, London, 2019 (1983), p. 136.

34. Gilliland, McKemmish and Lau, p. 28.

35. Eugene A Nida, 'Science of Translation', *Language*, vol. 45, no. 3, 1969, p. 484.

36. The aim of the PIAF is to gather Francophone archivists and archival educators across the world and provide them with common resources on archival science.

37. 'afin de faciliter la compréhension et l'assimilation du cours par nos différents publics, sommes-nous convenus d'un vocabulaire de base sans chercher à proscrire les variantes lexicales ... nous avons privilégié les mots de cette langue que nous avons tous "en partage"', PIAF Website, available at <*http://www.piaf-archives.org/se-former/le-glossaire*>, accessed 7 June 2020.

38. 'Sir Winston Churchill affirmait, dit-on, que l'Angleterre et les États-Unis étaient deux pays amis séparés par une langue commune. Dans aucun domaine cette boutade n'est mieux vérifiée qu'en archivistique, au point que le Dictionnaire a dû à maintes reprises, différencier

les definitions "US" (États-Unis) des définitions "UK" (Royaume-Uni), voire "Canada" ou "Australia"', Duchein, 'Les Archives dans la Tour de Babel', p. 106.

39. Theodore R Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1965, pp. 122–3.
40. 'l'archivistique est étroitement liée aux systèmes juridiques gouvernementaux et adminstratifs de chaque pays, et … par conséquent, son vocabulaire reflète tout un ensemble de concepts qui, par définition, sont difficilement transposables d'un pays à l'autre', Duchein, 'Les Archives dans la Tour de Babel', p. 105.
41. 'l'ensemble des documents, y compris les données, quels que soient leur date, leur lieu de conservation, leur forme et leur support, produits ou reçus par toute personne physique ou morale et par tout service ou organisme public ou privé dans l'exercice de leur activité'. Article L211-1, Code du Patrimoine, La Bibliothèque Juridique, Paris, 2018, p. 31.
42. Viviane Frings-Hessami, 'Developing cultural understanding in the international record-keeping discourse: An exploratory study of the causes of misunderstandings of Continuum concepts among Francophone archivists', paper given on 11 July 2019, Archival Education and Research Institute Conference 2019, Liverpool.
43. ISO 30300 and ISO 15489:2001.
44. ISO 16175 and MoReq 2.
45. MoReq 2.
46. ISO 16175.
47. Geoffrey Yeo, *Records, Information and Data, Exploring the role of record-keeping in an information culture*, Facet Publishing, London, 2018.
48. Elodie Bouillon, 'L'évolution du vocabulaire français des archives, du milieu du XXe siècle à aujourd'hui' ('The evolution of French archival vocabulary from the middle of the 20th century until today'), Mémoire de recherche de Master 2 sous la direction de Céline Guyon, Septembre 2018, p. 41, available at <*https://www.enssib.fr/bibliotheque-numerique/notices/68355-l-evolution-du-vocabulaire-francais-des-archives-du-milieu-du-xxe-siecle-a-aujourd-hui*>, accessed 30 June 2020.
49. ibid.
50. Duchein, 'Vocabulaire des archives', p. 90.
51. Françoise Bourdon, 'The French Translation of the EAC DTC: A Few Thoughts on Interoperability with Reference to Authority Data', in Bill Stockting and Fabienne Queyroux (eds), *Encoding Across Frontiers: Proceedings of the European Conference on Encoded Archival Description and Context (EAD and EAC), Paris, France, 7-8 October 2004*, The Haworth Information Press, New York, 2005, p. 231.
52. International Council on Archives, Multilingual Archival Terminology.
53. Jay Atherton, 'From Life Cycle to Continuum: Some Thoughts on the Records Management – Archives Relationship', *Archivaria*, vol. 21, 1985, pp. 43–51.
54. A new version of the Abrégé d'archivistique was published in June 2020.
55. 'L'environnement numérique bouleverse la théorie des trois âges des archives: le moment de la prise en charge des archives est radicalement avancé. Le document à archiver doit être pris en charge dans un système approprié dès sa validation … ou même dès sa création, et non de manière différée', Association des archivistes français, *Abrégé d'Archivistique*, 3rd ed., AAF, Paris, 2012, p. 67.
56. Frings-Hessami, 'Developing cultural understanding'.
57. Viviane Frings-Hessami, 'La Perspective du Continuum des archives illustré par l'exemple d'un document personnel' ('The Records Continuum perspective illustrated by the example of a personal document'), *Revue Électronique Suisse de Science de l'Information*, no. 19, 2018, available at <*http://www.ressi.ch/num19/article_149*., accessed 5 June 2020.
58. Frings-Hessami, 'Developing cultural understanding'.
59. Andrew Flinn, 'Community Histories, Community Archives: Some Opportunities and Challenges,' *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2007, pp. 151–76.

60. Patrice Marcilloux, *Les ego-archives: traces documentaires et recherche de soi* (*Ego-archives: documentary traces and the search for the self*), Presses universitaires de Rennes, Rennes, 2013, p. 138.
61. Gérard Ermisse, 'Archives de Bayonne et du Pays basque' ('Archives from Bayonne and the Basque country'), *La Gazette des archives*, no. 199, 2005, pp. 113–9; Marcilloux, pp. 143–5.
62. Collectif Archives LGBTQI, 'Qui sommes-nous?' ('Who are we?'), available at <*https://archiveslgbtqi.fr/qui-sommes-nous/historique-du-collectif/*>, accessed 7 June 2020.
63. Ashley Gosselar, '"We out here and we've been here": the role of university archives in student-led campus history initiatives to remember and reassert black presence in American higher education', *Comma*, no. 2018/1–2, 2020, pp. 87–97.
64. 'Representational belonging' was coined by Michelle Caswell, Marika Cifor and Mario Ramirez in their 2016 article 'To Suddenly Discover Yourself Existing: Uncovering the Impact of Community Archives,' published in *The American Archivist*, vol. 79, no. 1, pp. 56–81.
65. See Eric Ketelaar, 'The Archivist's Creed, Task and Aim. Revisiting the first two international congresses 1950, 1953′, in: F Daelemans (ed.), *Miscellanea in honorem Caroli Kecskeméti*, (Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique, numéro spécial 54), Brussels, 1998, pp. 241–51; Eric Ketelaar, 'Ethnologie archivistique' ('Archival ethnology'), *La Gazette des archives*, no. 192, 2001, p. 7–20.
66. On Herbert see: IdRef – Identifiants et référenciels pour l'enseignement supérieur et la recherche, 'Herbert, Jean (1897–1980), Identifiant IdRef: 026919745′, available at <*https://www.idref.fr/026919745*>, accessed 5 June 2020.
67. ibid, p. ii.
68. ibid., p. iii.
69. ibid., p. vii.
70. Duchein, 'A propos de la terminologie archivistique'; 'Les archives dans la Tour de Babel'.
71. He wrote: 'I am not talking here as much about inter-language translations as I am talking about issues of definition and "proper usage" in our own language. It is quite sure that we often use terminology rather loosely and to some extent illogically', Duchein, 'A propos de la terminologie archivistique', p. 7.
72. Delmas, p. 7.
73. InterPARES, 'About the research', available at <*https://interparestrust.org/trust/about_research/summary*>, accessed 5 June 2020.
74. Luciana Duranti, 'Jenkinson Disrupted? The InterPARES Journey', paper presented at University College London, 16 May 2019.
75. MAT is available at <*http://www.ciscra.org/mat/mat*>.
76. International Council on Archives, Multilingual Archival Terminology, available at <*https://www.ica.org/en/online-resource-centre/multilingual-archival-terminology*>, accessed 7 June 2020.
77. Available at <*http://ciscra.org/index.php*>, accessed 5 June 2020.
78. International Council on Archives, 'List of Language Administrators', <*https://www.ica.org/en/online-resource-centre/multilingual-archival-terminology/list-contributors*>, accessed 29 August 2020.
79. Delmas, cover.
80. Duchein, 'Les Archives dans la Tour de Babel', p. 103.
81. Jean Laveissiere, 'Le statut des archives en France: à propos de la loi n°79-18 du 3 janvier 1979 et de ses décrets d'application' ('The status of archives in France: on the law no. 79-18 of 3 January 1979 and its implementing decrees'), *La Revue administrative*, no. 194, 1980, p. 142.
82. Duchein, 'Vocabulaire des archives', p. 90.
83. MAT database, 'Document', available at <*http://www.ciscra.org/mat/mat/term/156*>, accessed 30 June 2020.
84. Duchein, 'Les Archives dans la Tour de Babel', p. 112.

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Disclosure statement

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