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Archival terminology in the USSR and in post-Soviet countries: continuity and change

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ABSTRACT

The archival schools of the post-Soviet countries discussed in this article (Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus and Ukraine), despite having much in common, are quite different from one another. Their similarity is due to a comprehensive legal and methodological base inherited from the USSR, as well as to a well-established common practice. The principles of normative regulation of archiving were laid down in the USSR and built on the basic law on archiving and the normative acts of the central state body responsible for the archival affairs of the country. All the countries examined have retained the principles of forming the terminological system of the professional area through the development of a special national terminological standard which includes the terms given in the fundamental law on archiving. However, the extent to which the terminological systems are elaborated and are consistent both within themselves and with the terminological systems of related fields of activity in each country, is different. The article contains an analytical comparison of the definitions of fundamental archival terms standardised in national standards and laws on archival affairs in the abovementioned countries and in the USSR, and also shows the influence of ISO standards on the development of terminological systems in these countries.

KEYWORDS

Document; national terminological system; archival science; USSR; post-Soviet countries

Introduction and background

The year 2021 marks the 30th anniversary of the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Since that time there have been many changes in the republics that used to be part of the USSR but which have become independent countries with their own internal political structures and levels of economic development.

However, each of them has preserved something of the USSR past, and that is far from always negative. Thus, for example, in each of the now independent countries there are fully functional National Archives (formerly the Central State Archives of the Republic), inherited from the USSR, which are keeping the most valuable documents which have been created and preserved on the territory of the republic and are of historical and cultural value.¹

Scope and purpose

In this article, we will focus on one of the aspects that characterise the level of development of the archival schools of the USSR and post-Soviet countries, namely, the terminology used in archiving. Archival school is understood as a scientific school specialising in the study of archival aspects of the activities of society and the state, including issues of the structure and functionality of archival bodies, legal and methodological support of the activities of archives and scientific insight into archival problems, personnel training and professional development, and so on.

The terminology issues discussed in our research are of particular scientific interest for a number of reasons:

- (1) In the USSR, close attention was always paid to the terminological compatibility of related sectors of the society and the state, especially when using the same terms in both spheres (for example, the term 'document'). The terminological system of archival science as a scientific discipline of that period was one of the most developed. In this regard, it would be interesting to understand to what extent the terminological system of archival science has survived in the relevant countries to the present stage.
- (2) Due to the demise of Soviet centralised management of archival activities, the newly formed countries began to build their national archival systems. The specifics of their development, including the level of penetration of information technologies into this area, led to differences in their archival terminology systems. Comparison of the definitions of some fundamental archival terms will enable us to analyse to what extent they are similar/different and identify the national characteristics of the relevant terminological systems.
- (3) The level of development and consistency in the definitions of the terms within the terminological systems of archiving in the countries involved is demonstrated not only by the existence of a national scientific archival school, but also by the level of its development,² as terminology is always a matter of scientific discussion and agreement of experts.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to compare the definitions of the fundamental archival terms, used in legislation and national standards of the post-Soviet countries, with their Soviet counterparts, allowing us to see the evolution or continuity of these definitions, and hence to clearly understand the meaning of these terms. It should be noted that this study has no precedent and has been conducted not only for the first time, but also with the involvement of experts from the countries concerned, that is Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

The choice of countries is due not only to their continuity of the USSR practice in matters of archiving (the same refers to most of the former Soviet republics, with the exception of the Baltic countries), but first and foremost to linguistic accessibility (use of the Russian language). The aspect of linguistic accessibility of materials (their publication in Russian) is of paramount importance, since comparing the definitions of terms requires their unambiguous understanding by all participants in this project. However,

the approach proposed in this article can form the basis for further, more extensive multilingual research.

Another criterion for choosing these particular countries was the scientific activity of their representatives at international and Russian archival conferences and forums, demonstrating the development of archival schools in these countries. This is largely due to the fact that these countries have specialised research institutes subordinate to their state archival bodies, whose task is to develop the terminological and methodological base of document science and archival science as scientific disciplines.³

Principles and methods of the choice of terms and level of terminology elaboration in the countries under study

The Russian Federation, being the legal successor of the USSR, has until recently played the leading role in the regulation of archiving and its terminological system in the post-Soviet space. Several former Soviet republics are still simply adapting methodological documents and national standards of the Russian Federation, which regulate recordkeeping and archiving, by adopting them in their national language.

The terminology of the other countries under study is discussed in this article according to the alphabetical order of their names, and their order is not related to the level of development of their terminological base, since it is very high in all of them, which makes this material so interesting. As noted above, there have been no specialised studies on archival terminology in these countries. However, there are a number of articles devoted to the professional records management terminology.⁴ A very informative article related to terminology and the Universal Declaration on Archives (UDA) is included in this special issue of *Archives and Manuscripts*.⁵ There have been studies devoted to various theoretical aspects of term formation.⁶ Yet, this article is the first publication presenting a unique approach aimed at comparing definitions of archiving terms that have the same source, but are now used in the countries of the post-Soviet space with their own shades of meaning and different degree of influence of ISO standards, reflecting the level of development of their scientific archival school.

The article will analyse the definitions of the terms ‘document’, ‘archival document’, ‘archive’, ‘national archival fond’ and ‘document of the archival fond’. These terms have been selected because of their widespread use and thus, the necessity of their uniform understanding. The method applied in this article is that of a systemic comparative analysis of the definitions of the terms and comparison of the term names, as well as a retrospective approach.

This study will make it possible to see the differences that have appeared in the definitions of terms and to assess how crucial they are in relation to each other and how significant they are in regard to the terminological system of the USSR archival school. This will also enable us to understand whether the archivists of the post-Soviet countries participating in the study still speak the same professional language.

Moreover, it is also of interest to see to what extent the archival terminology of these countries is in tune with the realities of our time and the specifics of the international terminological system used in records and archives management. Given that information about the national archival schools of the USSR and of the studied countries and about

their terminological systems is practically non-existent in the English language literature, our study will partly fill this gap.

Theory and practice of building the terminological system of the archival school in the USSR

One of the most important achievements of the USSR archival school was a clearly built and well-coordinated terminological system. The terminological system itself was based on well-developed scientific foundations.

The terminological system of any branch of state activity in the USSR was based on the following scientific principles:

- subordination of terms from general to specific, for example the concept of ‘documented information’ is always broader than that of ‘document’;
- use of both the faceted and hierarchical principles of classification of the terms, for example the generic concept ‘document’ is hierarchically higher than the terms ‘official document’ and ‘archival document’ since they are subordinated terms denoting varieties of the ‘document’; yet both terms are equivalent to each other and hence arranged in faceted order in relation to the generic concept ‘document’;
- definition of a smaller concept through a larger one, for example ‘documented information’ is the ‘information’ recorded on a medium according to certain rules;
- consistency of the terminology of related fields of activity through the development of specialised terminological standards for each of them, but coordinated with each other; for example the term document is used in document science, library science, archival science, jurisprudence, and so on;
- normative consolidation of the definitions of terms (state standards in the USSR belonged to normative acts) and their use as standardised terms.

It is notable that the principles of developing the terminological systems in the USSR used in different areas (for example in archival science) corresponded to international approaches and standards.⁷

The terminological system of archival science and archiving was not static; it developed as a result of its conceptualisation, with respect to the changing practice of its use. The scientific development and expansion of the terminological system of archival science was carried out through the dictionaries of archival terminology.

Among the most important ones are:

- the ‘Concise Dictionary of Archival Terminology’,⁸ in which the body of terms used in archival science was expanded in comparison with the State standard (GOST);⁹
- the ‘Concise Dictionary of Types and Varieties of Documents’,¹⁰ in which the composition of terms denoting the types of documents created and used in management was more detailed than in the state standards.

Although there have been no later editions of these dictionaries, they played an important role in the expansion of professional terminology and its standardisation.

At the same time, attempts were undertaken to build unified approaches to understanding the terms by identifying equivalent terms in different languages, developing and correlating their definitions within the countries of the Soviet bloc. The 'Dictionary of Modern Archival Terminology of Socialist Countries'¹¹ is of particular interest in this respect. In that dictionary, an attempt was made to bring into accordance at least 500 definitions of terms used in archiving in more than 10 countries that were members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA).

Archival science in the USSR was institutionalised around several centres: the Main Archival Administration (nowadays Federal Archive Agency by the President of the Russian Federation, ROSARKHIV), the Moscow State Historical and Archival Institute (nowadays the Russian State University for the Humanities, RSUH) and the All-Union Scientific and Research Institute of Recordkeeping and Archives (nowadays the All-Russian Scientific and Research Institute of Document and Archives Management, VNIIDAD).

It should be noted that in the research area of 'Terminology of document science and archival science' that appeared in the USSR in the 1970s-80s, the term 'document' was interpreted not as confirmation of property rights, obligations and evidence in business activities, but as an object of historical and cultural heritage in which some information is fixed in a man-made way to be conveyed in time and space.

This interpretation of the term 'document' became dominant in the USSR and was standardised in GOST 16487-83;¹² it also influenced the creation of the above-mentioned dictionary of archival terminology of socialist countries.

Yet, dictionaries were reference books and did not have legal force, which allowed replenishing them with newly appearing terms and experimenting with their definitions. Due to the fact that it was not possible in the USSR to publish a dictionary of archiving and recordkeeping terms without its preliminary scientific review and approval by the State Archive Authority and VNIIDAD, which were the developers of the terminological standard, no significant differences in the definitions of terms given in state standards and dictionaries can be observed.

In the USSR, the official terminological system of the professional sphere in question was fixed in the special terminological state standard 'Recordkeeping and Archiving. Terms and Definitions', which was a normative document and subject to universal application. The standard was updated every 10 years, which made it possible to reflect all the changes in it, keep it up to date and at the same time maintain stability and continuity in the professional terminology system. The standard included only well-established terms that were widely used in practice, and their definitions were discussed in detail by the scientific and professional community at the stage of the standard's development.

The GOSSTANDART (Russian Federal Agency for Standardisation) of the USSR and its special technical committee were another important institution responsible for the consistency of the terminological systems of related fields of activity. Since in the USSR there were specific GOSSTANDART requirements for the terminological standards of each professional area, other state standards regulating processes and technologies, unlike ISO standards, could not contain the terminology. These state standards used the terms included in the state terminological standard of the relevant area, but they did not have a special terminological section like ISO standards.

A special technical committee of GOSSTANDART was able to control the consistency of the terminological systems of related fields of activity. Considering the fact that in the USSR state standards had the status of a normative document, i.e. were mandatory, this approach allowed the formation of united terminological systems used in different fields. For example, the term 'document' used in almost all areas (recordkeeping, archiving, management, law, and so on) had a common definition in all of them. Furthermore, in the state terminological standards developed for each of the specific areas, the term 'document' had sub-terms reflecting its specificity in the particular area, for example an 'archival document' for archiving, an 'official document' for recordkeeping and management.

However, after the collapse of the USSR, the situation of the formation of the terminological base in the field of activity both in the Russian Federation and in other countries of the post-Soviet space changed significantly for several reasons:

- terms and their definitions began to be included in legislative acts that have higher legal force in comparison with standards;
- in some cases, the definitions of these terms in the laws were not coordinated with their definitions given in the standards;
- in the countries that joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO) the standards ceased to be normative documents that are mandatory for use, which led to a decrease in their status and made the legitimacy of using the definitions of terms rather ambiguous;
- the introduction of the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) standards has resulted, on the one hand, in the appearance of new terms, expanding the terminological system of the professional area, and, on the other, in the duplication of concepts and the ambiguity of their interpretation;
- the introduction of standards for ISO quality management systems using the terms 'record' and 'document' in rather a loose interpretation led to an imbalance of the coordinated terminological systems of document management and archival research inherited from the USSR due to the appearance of the term 'recording', traditionally used in these countries in the sense of recording any information on any medium for any purpose and not applicable for recordkeeping and archiving.

Comparative analysis of the definitions of the fundamental archival terms in the USSR and in the countries of the post-Soviet space

Given the limited scope of this study and the great diversity of experience of the countries of the post-Soviet space, we will consider only general trends, including similarities and differences in approaches, as well as a number of fundamental terms used in archival studies in the represented independent states.

In terms of similarities in the principles of the formation of the professional terminological system in each of the countries (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine), there is on the one hand a continuity since the USSR period (in maintaining the practice of developing a specialised terminological standard), and on the other hand the influence of ISO terminology led to some differences.

Comparative analysis of the definitions of the term 'document'

In each country, the cornerstone of the entire terminological system of archival research is the term 'document', understood in the USSR as 'A material object with information secured by a human-made method for its transmission in time and space'.¹³ Later in the first terminological standard of the Russian Federation used in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), it was defined as 'Information recorded on a physical medium with details that allow it to be identified'.¹⁴

The term 'document' is traditionally accompanied by several sub-terms: 'archival document', 'official document', 'written document', 'machine-readable document', 'electronic document', and so on. Sub-terms are not subordinate to each other. Therefore, the principle of hierarchy is replaced by the faceted principle of classification. Moreover, at present the term 'document' is built into the hierarchical system of coordinated terms 'Information' – 'data' – 'documented information' – 'document'. The differences between the countries are in the range of sub-terms and in the degree of elaboration of their definitions.

At the same time, the definition of the term 'document' itself evolved in each country in its own way, as illustrated in Table 1.

Thus, in Russia, the definition of the term focuses on the facts that the medium is important in itself, but its carrier (electronic or paper) does not matter, and that information must have details for its identification. Given the established practice coming from the USSR that some of the mandatory details of a document (such as date, registration number, signature) give the

Table 1. Definitions of 'document' in the terminological standards.

Country	Russian Federation	Republic of Belarus	Republic of Kazakhstan	Ukraine
The term 'document' in the national language and its transliteration	'документ' (dokument)	'дакумент' (dakument)	құжат (kjuzhat)	'документ' (dokument)
Definition of the term 'document' in the national standard	'Information recorded on a medium with details that allow it to be identified.' ^a	'Information recorded on a material medium with details that allow it to be identified, created, received and preserved by an organisation or person for evidence or reference purposes in the process of fulfilling legal obligations or carrying out its activities.' ^b	'Information recorded on a physical medium that allows it to be identified.' ^c	'Information recorded on a material medium, the main function of which is to preserve and transmit it in time and space.' ^d

^aGOST R 7.0.8–2013 'Система стандартов по информации, библиотечному и издательскому делу. Делопроизводство и архивное дело. Термины и определения' ('System of standards for information, library and publishing. Recordkeeping and archiving. Terms and definitions'), Moscow 2013, entry 7, available at <<http://www.pravo.gov.ru>>, accessed 25 December 2020.

^bSTB 2059–2013 'Делопроизводство и архивное дело. Термины и определения' ('Recordkeeping and Archiving. Terms and Definitions'), Minsk, 2013, entry 3.1.3, available at <<http://www.pravo.by>>, accessed 25 December 2020.

^cST RK 1037–2001 'Делопроизводство и архивное дело. Термины и определения' ('Recordkeeping and Archiving. Terms and Definitions'), Astana, 2001, entry 2.3, available at <<http://adilet.zan.kz>>, accessed 25 December 2020.

^dDSTU 2732: 2004 'Делопроизводство и архивное дело. Термины и определения' ('Recordkeeping and Archiving. Terms and Definitions'), Kiev, 2005, entry 3.3, available at <<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua>>, accessed 25 December 2020.

document legal force, it is assumed that a document must have them all. However, this is not clearly stated, which makes the definition somewhat ambiguous.

In Belarus, we can see the continuity with the definition of the term (including the above-mentioned features of its understanding in the USSR), and at the same time, the correlation of this definition with ISO 15489-1:2001, which emphasises the role of the document in the confirmation of legal obligations and an organisation's business activities for evidence and reference purposes.

Evidently, the Kazakhstan definition of the term literally coincides with the Russian counterpart coming from the USSR. It must be noted that in the standard of Kazakhstan, document and documented information are still indicated as synonyms.

In Ukraine, we can see an expansion of the concept, when the definition makes it possible to consider as documents all the material objects that can be used to transmit information in society.

It seems apparent from the above analysis that the interpretation of the term 'document' in these countries is almost the same in the national terminological standards. It is quite general and is then detailed in sub-terms related to the subject area of their creation and use.

Comparative analysis of the definitions of the term 'archival document'

In the context of this study, it is advisable to analyse the definitions of the sub-term 'archival document' (see Table 2). It is notable that the terminological standard of the USSR included the term 'archival document', but did not have a definition for this term.¹⁵ The definition of the term 'archival document' appeared later, in the terminological standard of the Russian

Table 2. Definitions of 'archival document' in the terminological standards.

Country	Russian Federation	Republic of Belarus	Republic of Kazakhstan	Ukraine
The term 'archival document' in the national language and its transliteration	'архивный документ' (arkhivnij dokument)	'архіўны дакумент' (archiuny dakument)	'архив құжатты' (arkhiv kujzhat)	'архівний документ' (arkhivnij dokument)
Definition of the term 'archival document' in the national standard.	'A document preserved or to be preserved due to its significance for citizens, society, or the state.' ^a	'A document preserved in the archive.' ^b	'A document preserved or to be preserved due to its significance to society and equally having value to the owner.' ^c	'A document that ceased to fulfil the function for which it was created, but is being preserved or is to be preserved, given its value to a person, society or state, as well as to the owner, and also as movable property.' ^d

^aGOST R 7.0.8–2013, entry 9.

^bSTB 2059–2013, entry 3.3.3.

^cST RK 1037-2001, entry 4.1.8.

^dDSTU 2732: 2004, entry 5.1.1.

Federation used in the CIS countries and read as ‘Document retained or to be preserved due to its significance to society and equally having value to the owner’.¹⁶

As can be seen from the definitions, the term ‘archival document’ is basically understood in the same way in these countries. This is a document that is preserved because of its significance.

However, the definition given by the Belarusian colleagues is very concise and specific, because there are documents which have the same characteristics as ‘archival document’ but are stored elsewhere.

The definition given in the standard of Kazakhstan focuses on the value of the document for its owner, which greatly expands the concept of ‘archival document’, because not every owner transfers their documents to the archive.

As regards Ukraine, it is stated that the ‘archival document’ can also be movable property, which lays emphasis on the fact that the document may be the object of a sale. This aspect is not mentioned in the other three definitions of the term.

The definition given in the Russian standard is formulated quite generically and can be applied to any document preserved in the archive.

As concerns the laws on archival affairs of all the countries, they also contain the definition of the term ‘archival document’, as shown in [Table 3](#).

As can be seen from the above definitions of the term ‘archival document’, given in national standards and the archival laws, they are not always clearly coordinated among them even within the same country. This suggests that the terminological system of archival management that existed in the USSR has ceased to be unified in the course of the development process of these countries, and the systems began to develop along their chosen path.

Comparative analysis of the definitions of the term ‘archive’

Another cornerstone of archival terminology is the term ‘archive’. In the USSR, the term was understood as ‘An organisation or its structural unit that receives and stores documents in order to use retrospective documentary information’.¹⁷ In the commonly used terminological standard of 1998, the term ‘archive’ was understood as ‘An organisation or its structural unit that receives and stores archival documents for the purpose of use’.¹⁸ Thus, we can see that the aim of creating an archive is to store documents for the purpose of the information contained in them. Moreover, the archive in these standards is understood to be an independent organisation or a structural unit of the organisation, but not a collection of documents stored in the archive.

[Table 4](#) demonstrates how the term ‘archive’ has evolved.

Thus, the definitions of the term in all countries are partly similar, since they all imply a physically separated repository of documents or an institution, which is typical for understanding the archive as a structure.

But in view of the fact that the standard is used by commercial organisations that do not have an archive as a separate structural unit, the definition of the term cannot be considered as universal. In addition, it does not quite correspond to the international ISO terminological system (and modern practice), in which the ‘archive’ can be a virtual repository, and not just a special unit and/or physically separate premises. Yet, all definitions show the objectives of the archive:

Table 3. Definitions of ‘archival document’ in the archival laws.

Country	Russian Federation	Republic of Belarus	Republic of Kazakhstan	Ukraine
Definition of the term ‘archival document’ in the national law	‘A material medium with information recorded on it, which has reference details that can be identified, and must be preserved due to the importance of the carrier and the information for citizens, society and the state.’ ^a	‘A document with information recorded on it, regardless of the type of medium, preserved in the archive because of its significance to citizens, society, and the state.’ ^b	‘A document with information recorded on it, regardless of the type of its medium, preserved due to its significance for society and the state, as well as having value for the owner.’ ^c	‘A document, regardless of its kind, type of material, information medium, place, time of creation, place of storage and form of ownership of it, which ceased to perform the functions for which it was created, but is preserved or is to be preserved, taking into account its significance for a person, society or state or value for the owner as well as an object of movable property.’ ^d

^aFederal Law of 22 October 2004 N 125-FZ ‘On Archival Affairs in the Russian Federation’ (Федеральный закон России ‘Об архивном деле в Российской Федерации’), as amended on 28 December 2017, available at <<http://www.pravo.gov.ru>>, accessed 25 December 2020.

^bLaw of the Republic of Belarus dated 25 November 2011 No. 323–3 ‘On Archival Affairs and Recordkeeping in the Republic of Belarus’ (Закон Республики Беларусь ‘Об архивном деле и делопроизводстве в Республике Беларусь’), as amended on 17 July 2018, available at <<http://www.pravo.by>>, accessed 25 December 2020.

^cLaw of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 22 December 1998 No. 326-1 ‘On the National Archival Fond and Archives’ (Закон Республики Казахстан ‘О национальном архивном фонде и архивах’), as amended on 16 May 2018, available at <<http://adilet.zan.kz>>, accessed 25 December 2020.

^dLaw of Ukraine dated 13 December 2001 No. 2888–III ‘On the National Archival Fond and Archival Institutions’ (Закон України ‘Про Національний архівний фонд та архівні’), as amended on 14 January 2020, available at <<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua>>, accessed 25 December 2020.

acquisition (including selection), stock-taking, preservation and use of archive documents. If we continue these definitions by decoding the term ‘archival document’ on the basis of its definitions given in the national standards and the laws on archival affairs, we will see that the concept of ‘archive’ will be interpreted much more broadly than in this definition. At the present stage, the archive has come to be understood not only as an institution, but also as a set of documents subject to archival storage. This is reflected in the Kazakh definition of the term ‘archive’.

Comparative analysis of the definitions of the term ‘archival fond’

Another important term in archival science is the ‘national archival fond’, the definition of which is given in the laws on archival affairs.

Table 4. Definitions of ‘archive’ in the terminological standards.

Country	Russian Federation	Republic of Belarus	Republic of Kazakhstan	Ukraine
The term ‘archive’ in the national language and its transliteration	‘архив’ (arkhiv)	‘архіў’ (arkhiu)	‘мұрағат’ (muragat) since 2016: ‘архив’ (arkhiv)	‘архів’ (arkhiv)
Definition of the term ‘archive’ in the national standard	The organisation or structural unit of an organisation that carries out the acquisition, preservation, stock-taking and use of archival documents. ^a	‘Organisation or structural unit of an organisation that carries out the preservation, acquisition, stock-taking and use of archival documents.’ ^b	The totality of archival documents, as well as a legal entity or structural unit of a legal entity that acquires and preserves archival documents in the interests of users. ^c	The institution or its structural unit, which organises and ensures the selection, accumulation of archival documents, their stock-taking, preservation, and use. ^d

^aGOST R 7.0.8–2013, entry 6.^bSTB 2059–2013, entry 3.3.1.^cST RK 1037–2001, entry 4.1.1.^dDSTU 2732: 2004, entry 5.1.8.

It must be noted that the concept of ‘national archival fond’ is generic, since each country has its own more precise name. Table 5 provides more details.

Thus, the ‘national archival fond’ in each of the countries means practically the same thing: a set of documents of historical, cultural, economic and other value. It is important

Table 5. Definitions of ‘national archival fond’ in the archival laws.

Country	Russian Federation	Republic of Belarus	Republic of Kazakhstan	Ukraine
Definition of the term ‘national archival fond’ in the national law.	The Archive Fond of the Russian Federation’ is ‘a historically formed and constantly replenished set of archival documents reflecting the material and spiritual life of society, being of historical, scientific, social, economic, political and cultural significance, making an integral part of the historical and cultural heritage of the peoples of the Russian Federation, related to information resources and subject to permanent storage.’ ^a	‘National Archive Fond of Belarus Republic’ is ‘a historically formed and constantly replenished set of documents of historical, scientific, social, economic, political or cultural value, reflecting the material and spiritual life of the Belarusian people.’ ^b	‘National Archive Fond of the Republic of Kazakhstan’ is ‘the totality of all archives, both state and non-state, archival fonds and archival collections, monuments in the form of documents, documents of historical, scientific, social, economic, political or cultural significance and determined as having national significance according to the due process of law.’ ^c	‘National Archive Fond of Ukraine’ is ‘a set of archival documents reflecting the history of the spiritual and material life of the Ukrainian people and other peoples, having cultural value and being the Ukrainian nation’s heritage.’ ^d

^aFederal Law of 22 October 2004 N 125-FZ.^bLaw of the Republic of Belarus dated 25 November 2011 No. 323–3.^cLaw of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 22 December 1998 No. 326-1.^dLaw of Ukraine dated 13 December 2001 No. 2888-III.

to note that all the definitions of this concept deal with documents, their sets and collections. This approach was typical of the USSR, where there existed only state organisations.

Despite the fact that the Kazakh definition emphasises the fact that the national archival fond includes documents of state and non-state organisations, this does not change the semantic affinity of the definitions of this term in other countries.

The fact is that the national archival fonds of these countries consist of state and non-state parts. Archival fonds of non-state organisations, which have historical and other value for the state, while remaining the property of these organisations, will be included in the non-state part of the national archival fond of the country. At the same time, the documents of these organisations selected for the composition of the national archival fond can be stored either in the archives of these organisations as in their depository, or in the national archives of the country. This practice of acquisitions for the national archival fond is typical of Russia and Belarus and partly of Ukraine, but in the definitions of the national archival fond, this aspect is not highlighted.¹⁹

It is also worth noting that not every document is a document of the national archival fond. Therefore, it is important to know how the concept of ‘document of the national archival fond’ is defined within the regulatory framework of the countries in question, as shown in Table 6.

Thus, in all the countries in question a document of the national archival fond is understood as an archival document that has undergone an examination of value and is subject to state registration and permanent storage due to its importance for the society and state. Despite the fact that the Belarusian definition does not specify the state registration of these documents, it is clearly expressed in other provisions of the law on the country’s archives.

It should be noted that in the USSR the methodology for describing, registration and stock-taking of archival documents in general and documents of the national archival fond in particular was well organised. These rules and methods have been preserved in almost all the former Soviet republics, which is somehow reflected in the terminological systems of these independent countries.

Table 6. Definitions of ‘document of the national archival fond’ in the archival laws.

Country	Russian Federation	Republic of Belarus	Republic of Kazakhstan	Ukraine
Definition of the term ‘document of the national archival fond’ in the national law	‘An archival document that underwent the appraisal, was registered with the state and is subject to permanent storage.’ ^a	‘An archival document, as well as a document with information recorded on it, regardless of the type of its medium, subject to preservation due to its importance for the citizens, society and state.’ ^b	‘An archival document that underwent the state appraisal, was registered with the state and is subject to permanent storage.’ ^c	‘An archival document, the cultural value of which was recognised by the appraisal and which is subject to state stock-taking and storage.’ ^d

^aFederal Law of 22 October 2004 N 125-FZ.

^bLaw of the Republic of Belarus dated 25 November 2011 No. 323–3.

^cLaw of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 22 December 1998 No. 326-1.

^dLaw of Ukraine dated 13 December 2001 No. 2888–III.

Terminological standards of the USSR and post-Soviet countries: similarities and differences

The definitions of the above concepts clearly reflect their continuity from the USSR terminological system of archival science. At the same time, the introduction of ISO standards used in records management led to some changes in the understanding of a number of terms. A striking example is the term ‘document’, which in the Soviet tradition was perceived as an information resource being, above all, of historical value, but nowadays, with the introduction of ISO standards, has acquired a different shade of meaning connected with its legal value.

Whereas the maturity of the terminological systems of the countries under consideration cannot be assessed in the framework of this study due to the limited scope of the material, the number of entries, as well as the structure of the specialised national terminological standards of these countries are indicative of their levels of maturity (see Table 7).

It must be noted, that the terminological standard GOST R 51141-98 ‘Recordkeeping and Archiving. Terms and Definitions’ developed by the Russian Federation in 1998 was used in the post-Soviet countries studied before their own terminological standards, the actual versions of which are referred to in this article.

As regards the structure of the national terminological standards of the countries under consideration, it is necessary to note the newly introduced features of their construction in Ukraine and Belarus, which consist of correlating national terms with their international and Russian counterparts. In fact, the standards contain Russian-language and English-language names of terms, but their definitions are given in the national languages. In addition, there are official Russian-language versions of the terminological standards of these countries.

Another characteristic of the standards of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine is the principle of numbering their terms within the thematic group. The entry number of the term has a three-level sequence, which consists of the section number, subsection number and serial number of the term itself. This numbering principle is embedded in ISO standards and is very convenient to use, in contrast to the ‘gross’ principle of numbering the term entries used in the USSR and still practiced in Russia.

Impact of ISO standards on the terminological systems of the countries under study

Another specific feature of the formation of the terminological systems of the countries under study is the practice of using ISO standards. Despite the fact that in the countries under consideration ISO 15489-1: 2001 ‘Information and Documentation – Records Management – Part 1: General’²⁰ was translated and introduced word for word, subsequent standards, including ISO standards series 30300 ‘Records Management Systems’²¹ were not implemented in all countries. Russia became the leader in the implementation of ISO international standards, having introduced most of the ISO standards for records management (ISO 15489-1:2001 and 2016, ISO 30300 series for records management systems) and related areas (ISO 9000 standards for quality management systems and ISO 27000 series for information security systems, and so on).

Table 7. Number of terms in the national standards.

Name of the country and national standard, total number of terms it contains	Title of the section (and subsections) of the standard and the number of terms it contains		
Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), GOST 16487–83 'Recordkeeping and Archiving. Terms and Definitions': 94 terms	General concepts: 25 terms	Recordkeeping (official [managerial] document, organisation of work with documents): 18 terms	Archival affairs (State Archival Service and organisation of documents of the State Archival Fond of the USSR, preservation of documents, scientific and information activities of archives): 50 terms
GOST R 51141–98 'Recordkeeping and Archiving. Terms and Definitions': 140 terms	General concepts: 31 terms	Recordkeeping (documentation, organisation of work with documents): 44 terms	Archival affairs (organisation of documents of the Archival Fond of the Russian Federation, preservation of documents, scientific and information activities of archives): 33 terms
Russian Federation (Russia), GOST R 7.0.8–2013 'Recordkeeping and Archiving. Terms and Definitions': 174 terms	General concepts: 43 terms	Recordkeeping (documentation, organisation of work with documents): 61 terms	Archival affairs (preservation and recording of archival documents, acquisition of the archive, information activity of the archive): 68 terms
Belarus Republic (Belarus), STB 2059-2013 'Recordkeeping and Archiving. Terms and Definitions': 123 terms	General concepts: 36 terms	Recordkeeping: 40 terms	Archival affairs: 47 terms
Kazakhstan Republic (Kazakhstan), ST RK 1037–2001 'Recordkeeping and Archiving. Terms and Definitions': 158 terms	General concepts: 31 terms	Recordkeeping (documentation, organisation of work with documents): 56 terms	Archival affairs (organisation of archival documents, preservation of documents, scientific and information activities of archives): 69 terms
Ukraine DSTU 2732: 2004, 'Recordkeeping and Archiving. Terms and Definitions': 152 terms	General concepts: 34 terms	Recordkeeping (management documentation, organisation of work with official documentation): 44 terms	Archival affairs (formation of the National Archival Fond of Ukraine, ensuring the preservation of archival documents, scientific and information activities of archives): 74 terms

Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine introduced ISO 15489–1:2001 and the ISO 9000 series (for quality management systems) and, the same way as Russia, faced the problem of interpreting the terms 'record' and 'document'. In this matter, each of the countries chose its own way. Russia, which was the first to implement ISO 9000:2001,²² made the biggest mistake by translating the term 'record' in each

standard differently. In the first case (GOST R ISO 9000:2001), 'record' was translated into Russian as something that does not have clear rules for documenting the information, or for its format and, as a result, possessing no legal validity, and in the second case (GOST R ISO 15489-1:2007) as 'document', making these terms synonymous in recordkeeping. It is important to note that other countries have not avoided this mistake either. In the State terminological standards of Kazakhstan and Belarus, addressed to archivists and records managers, the terms 'document' and 'record' are synonyms, which is incorrect from the point of view of the meaning of the English term 'record'.

In Ukraine, a 'record' is an 'official document', which is true, since in the definition of the term 'record' (from ISO 15489-1:2001), its practice-oriented aspect (confirmation of business activity, evidentiary force) is clearly traced. Moreover, in the Ukrainian standard, the term 'record' is subordinated to the term 'document', which made it possible to exclude their synonymy.

Due to the fact that the countries have adopted these international standards word for word, there was a failure in their terminological systems, too, as the same term 'document', standardised in traditional national terminological standards and in the national standards developed on the basis of ISO standards, began to mean slightly different things. It is important to note that the ISO international standards themselves have different interpretations of the concepts of 'record' and 'document', which can be sometimes ambiguous. This aspect has been described in previous publications.²³

The analysis of the difference in the definitions of these concepts in ISO standards enabled a group of Russian specialists in recordkeeping, archiving and linguistics to create English-Russian dictionaries of standardised terminology for records managers and archivists:

- (1) 'Records Management: English-Russian Annotated Dictionary of Standardized Terminology' (2017),²⁴ in which the authors, on the basis of the analysis and comparison of the terms from 20 fundamental ISO standards, presented annotated entries for more than 500 terms included in the dictionary and provided clarifications regarding the specifics of their interpretation in the areas of records management and IT.
- (2) 'Records and Archives Management: English-Russian Dictionary of Standardized Terminology' (2019),²⁵ in which the same team of authors set the aim of collecting and comparing terms from 50 ISO standards, containing the fundamental terminology in the areas of records management, archives, quality management, information protection, risk management, information technologies (used in management) and librarianship.

These dictionaries made it possible to see the imperfections of the ISO terminological system and to start thinking about updating the national terminological base (at least in Russia). They are still the only English-Russian dictionaries containing more than 900 English-language terms related to records management, archives and IT used in these areas, standardised by ISO before 2019, and are used by Russian-speaking experts all over the post-Soviet space.

Conclusion

The terminological system of archival management that existed in the USSR has ceased to be unified in the course of the development process of the four countries discussed in this article. As regards their own terminological systems, they began to develop along their chosen way and today are at different degrees of maturity. This maturity (level of development) is demonstrated not only by the number and varieties of the terms, but also by the consistency of their definitions between themselves and between the terminological systems of related fields of activity, for example, recordkeeping and archiving. The existence of varieties of terms is reflective of the depth of elaboration of the terminological system.

As our research has shown, the principle of constructing a terminological system in the area of archiving in the countries in question was largely adopted from the USSR. At the head of this system is the national law on archives, which lays down the fundamental concepts of this professional area: 'national archival fond', 'archival document', 'document of the archival fond', and so on. The terminological base is expanded in national standards related to the spheres of recordkeeping and archiving, but includes only the concepts established and generally accepted in the professional community (for example, 'document', 'archival document'). These terms and definitions are used while developing normative documents for the archival sphere (for example, in the rules for the work of archives, and so on).

However, the non-systematic introduction of ISO standards in the countries under study has influenced the development of their national terminological systems, which resulted in the imprecise understanding of several English language terms, for example 'record'.

This is largely due to both the specifics of the ISO terminological system and the inaccurate interpretation of the meaning of the terms used in ISO standards in the countries involved in our research. At the same time, the inclusion of ISO standardised terminology in national terminological standards has led to an increase in the total number of terms used by archivists in those countries. This resulted not only in quantitative, but also qualitative changes in the terminological apparatus. The definitions of a number of terms have been updated and harmonised with their international understanding, for example, the term 'archive'. A whole set of terms related to IT in recordkeeping and archiving was included in national standards without forming analogue terms in the national languages (by means of direct translation), for example the terms 'format', 'digitisation' and so on. Yet the overwhelming majority of archival terms have retained their traditional definitions, formed in the archival school of the USSR. Despite the changed socio-economic conditions and the political structure of the new independent countries involved in our study, the meaning and definitions of the traditional archival terms basically has not changed. In a number of cases, it has been clarified or expanded based on modern realities. For example, in some countries the concept of 'national archival fond' began to highlight the form of ownership of documents, as well as their belonging to the state and non-state parts of the national archival fond.

As regards the quality of the national terminological systems of the discussed area and their consistency with the terminological systems of related spheres of activity, they

largely depend on the centralisation of the country's archival management at all levels, and our study clearly shows this. So, for example, in Belarus, the terminological systems of recordkeeping and archiving are clearly coordinated with each other. They preserve the continuity of a term's meaning and the consistency of the subordinate terms with the basic one, which is ensured by the continuous centralised management of both spheres of activity carried out by the central authority. In Russia, it was not until 2016 that the regulation of recordkeeping as a sphere of government activity was returned to the Federal Archival Agency. During an interval of more than 20 years, many normative documents and standards were adopted without mutual agreement on definitions of basic terms, including ISO standards. All this led to an imbalance in the terminological system of records management and left an imprint on the terminological system of archival science as well.

To sum up, it is necessary to emphasise the importance of scholarly and professional communication in archives, which will not be possible without a clear understanding of the meaning of the terms used. The work on the article showed that even countries that used to have a common basic terminological system, in the course of their evolution may come to a different understanding of the same terms. The introduction of information technology in archiving has resulted in the emergence of new terms that countries develop independently or borrow from ISO standards. Despite the seeming universality of ISO standards, their implementation is often accompanied by an incorrect interpretation of their terminology in relation to each individual country. Thus, the problem of the formation and development of national terminological systems in any area, including archiving, is closely related to the development of the international terminological system.

Notes

1. The collapse of the USSR did not lead to initiating a procedure for returning archival documents to the republics, since the policy of the Soviet state had not consisted of locating archives at the centre, but, on the contrary, of developing an archival network at the local level at the expense of the state budget, including free training of personnel in the area of archiving.
2. The issues of the organisation and functioning of the bodies governing the archival sphere at all-Union and republican levels, the legal support of archiving itself, the history of the archival school of the country, as well as its evolution in the post-Soviet space do not pertain to the objectives of this article as they would need a special study.
3. All-Russian Scientific and Research Institute for Records and Archives Management (VNIIDAD): <<http://www.vniidad.ru/>>; Belarusian Scientific and Research Centre of Electronic Records: <<http://www.archives.gov.by/>>; Belarusian Scientific and Research Institute for Recordkeeping and Archival Science: <<http://www.belniidad.by/>>; Committee of Information and Archives of the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan: <<https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/mcs?lang=en>>; Ukraine Scientific and Research Institute of Archiving and Document Science: <<https://undiasd.archives.gov.ua>>.
4. VD Banasyukevich, 'Вопросы терминологии управленческой документации' ('Questions of terminology of management documentation'), *Советские архивы (Soviet Archives)*, no. 4, 1974, pp. 17–30; E Chernay, 'Фондирование архивных документов' ('Funding of archival documents'), *The questions of Kazakhstan recordkeeping (Вопросы документооборота. Казахстана)*, vol. 8, no. 128, 2020, pp. 60–3; МР Ilyushenko, 'К понятию термина "документ" (эволюция термина и предмета документоведения)' ('On the concept of the term "document" (Evolution of the term and of the subject of

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5. С Roberto, K Anderson and M Crockett, ‘Translating the *Universal Declaration on Archives: working with archival traditions and languages across the world*’.
 6. A Nuopponen, ‘Methods of concept analysis – a comparative study (part 1 of 3)’, *LSP Journal – Language for special purposes, professional communication, knowledge management and cognition*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2010; A Nuopponen, ‘Methods of concept analysis – towards systematic concept analysis (part 2 of 3)’, *LSP Journal–Language for special purposes, professional communication, knowledge management and cognition*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2010; A Nuopponen, ‘Methods of concept analysis – tools for systematic concept analysis (part 3 of 3)’, *LSP Journal–Language for special purposes, professional communication, knowledge management and cognition*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2011. The three articles are available from <<http://lsp.cbs.dk>>.
 7. Nowadays, terminology issues are regulated by international standards:ISO 704:2009 ‘Terminology work. Principles and methods; ISO 860:2007 Terminology work – Harmonization of concepts and terms’; ISO 1087:2019 ‘Terminology work and terminology science – Vocabulary’, available at <<http://www.iso.org>>, accessed 25 December 2020.
 8. The Main Archival Administration under the Council of Ministers of the USSR, VNIIDAD, Moscow State Historical and Archival Institute, ‘Краткий словарь архивной терминологии’ (‘Concise Dictionary of Archival Terminology’), Moscow, 1968.
 9. ‘Делопроизводство и архивное дело. Термины и определения’ (‘Recordkeeping and archiving. Terms and definitions’), Moscow, 1970.
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 12. GOST 16487–83 ‘Делопроизводство и архивное дело. Термины и определения’ (‘Recordkeeping and Archiving. Terms and Definitions’), Moscow, 1985.
 13. *ibid.*, entry 3.
 14. GOST R 51141–98 ‘Делопроизводство и архивное дело. Термины и определения’ (‘Recordkeeping and Archiving. Terms and Definitions’), Moscow, 1998, entry 3.
 15. GOST 16487–83, entry 49.
 16. GOST R 51141–98, entry 80.
 17. GOST 16487–83, entry 45.
 18. GOST R 51141–98, entry 77.
 19. On the basis of the example of the definitions of this term and of the next one, which seem different at first glance, but in fact remain the same, one can understand how important it is to interpret them in the context of the entire archival legislation of the country.
 20. ISO 15489–1:2001 ‘Information and documentation – Records management – Part 1: General’, available at <<http://www.iso.org>>, accessed 11 November 2020.

21. ISO 30300:2011 'Information and documentation – Management systems for records – Fundamentals and vocabulary', available at <http://www.iso.org>, accessed 11 November 2020.
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