

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL  
ON ARCHIVES

CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL  
DES ARCHIVES

ICA Handbooks Series Volume 3

**Dictionary  
of Archival Terminology  
Dictionnaire  
de terminologie archivistique**

English and French  
With Equivalents in Dutch, German,  
Italian, Russian and Spanish

K.G.Saur München · New York · London · Paris

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English and French  
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Edited by Peter Walne  
Compiled by Frank B. Evans, François-J. Himly  
and Peter Walne

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General Slavic  
Reference  
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## Dictionary of Archival Terminology/Dictionnaire de terminologie archivistique

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This was the first attempt to do an international study to draw up a glossary of the terms used in the various countries in order to bring uniformity to the various countries. It was followed by a period of change in the archival world when parallel work in this region, when finally management was not yet a distinguishable component of the manager's task and when the application of the computer to the production of the manager's stock records led to his techniques and practices being modified. Now, twenty years on, the subject's work has become more complex and rigorous - and its requirements - have all passed well beyond the classical tradition of its terminology.

This dictionary attempts to establish a common terminology of terms in common use throughout the archival profession. It makes no attempt at completeness in every field of archival work nor in either of the two working languages. This would not only be very considerable difficulty given the state of the archival terminology spoken in each country and administrative practices, which vary considerably from country to country even within these groups of countries having common legal and administrative arrangements and traditions, but also because the archival has traditionally been a terminology, both specialized and general from other disciplines. Unlike the librarian and the information scientist, the archivist has less uniformly both a fixed and a more usage in between one country and another, as between one legal and administrative tradition and another, as well within the country. This dictionary is published terms are general in nature, comprehensive, uniform and even logical in an attempt to bring an order to the archival profession.

This volume, therefore, presents the role of a working system in several languages. The Working Party has particularly in the role of some of the more basic terms and researcher and research drawn up definitions in what it considers to be a preliminary general and broad outline to include the essential elements in working terms and basic related definitions. In other cases, such as microfilm and computer applications, it has agreed at simple standardized definitions.

It was in attempt to English language alphabetical order of terms with definitions in English, using British conventions of spelling. This is followed by the French equivalent of the terms and its French definition, which may vary for reasons of

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## Introduction

This *Dictionary of Archival Terminology* is the outcome of the deliberations of a Working Party of the International Council on Archives established in 1977. The members were: — Mr Peter Walne (United Kingdom) Chairman, Mr François-J. Himly and Mr Michel Duchein (France), Dr Eckhart G. Franz (Federal Republic of Germany), the late Mr Antonio Arago (Spain), Dr Frank B. Evans (United States of America and official Unesco representative), Mr Filip J. Dolgih (USSR) and Dr Charles Kecskeméti (Executive Secretary, ICA). The Working Party has had the benefit of discussions and correspondence with many archivists in the course of its work and to them for their helpful comments it is extremely grateful.

The work of compilation was begun with financial assistance from Unesco within its transfer of information and normative programmes and the International Council on Archives expresses its gratitude to Unesco for its support.

This present work is intended to supersede the *Lexicon of Archival Terminology* (Elsevier, 1964), which was itself the result of the work of a Committee on Terminology of the International Council on Archives, which sat from 1954 to 1963. This *Lexicon* was the first attempt on an international scale to draw up a glossary of the main terms then current in archival usage principally in European countries. It was produced in a period of change in the archival world when microforms were in their infancy, when records management was not yet an inseparable component of the archivist's task and when the application of the computer to the production of the archivist's stock-in-trade and to his techniques and practices barely thought of. Now, twenty years on, the archivist's task, his holdings, techniques and practices — and his terminology — have all passed well beyond the classical frontiers of his immediate predecessors.

This *Dictionary* attempts to assemble some 500 definitions of terms in common use throughout the archival profession. It makes no attempt at completeness in every field of archival work nor in either of the two working languages. This would be a task of very considerable difficulty since so much of the archivist's terminology springs from legal necessity and administrative practices, which vary considerably from country to country even within those groups of countries having common legal and administrative backgrounds and traditions, but also because the archivist has traditionally borrowed terminology, both specialised and general from other disciplines. Unlike the librarian and the information scientist, the archivist has less uniformity both in terms and their usage as between one country and another, as between one legal and administrative tradition and another, or even within one country. Thus no dictionary of archival terms can present as neat, comprehensive, uniform and even logical a picture and pattern as can its sister professions.

This volume, therefore, presents the core of concepts common to several languages. The Working Party has, particularly in the case of some of the most basic terms such as *archives* and *records*, drawn up definitions in what it considers to be a sufficiently general and broad outline to include the essential elements in varying national legally enacted definitions. In other cases, such as microforms and computer applications, it has arrived at similar standardised definitions.

The text is arranged in English language alphabetical order of terms with definitions in English, using British conventions of spelling. This is followed by the French equivalent of the term and its French definition, which may not, for reasons of

legal and administrative differences between the two traditions, be an exact translation of the English term and definition. Where there is no equivalent term in French archival usage, the English definition is translated directly into French and enclosed in square brackets. Finally, the equivalent terms (without definition) in Dutch, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish are given. In the case of equivalents in languages other than English, users will note that some terms appear in square brackets, an indication that whilst an equivalent word exists in other languages, it is not yet widely used within the archive profession. A blank entry in the equivalent section indicates that no equivalent term exists.

A serial numeration has been given to terms defined in the English language but *not* to entries serving as cross-references only. In this way, users in any of the other six languages may, by using the appropriate language alphabetical indexes which are tied to this serial numeration, locate a term and its definition in the English and French texts. English language cross-references will be found in the appropriate alphabetical place. French cross-references include the appropriate serial number to direct users immediately to the equivalent definition of a term defined in English and then in French without need to refer to the French alphabetical index.

In both English and French language definitions, words italicised indicate terms defined elsewhere in the text. In the case of English, these will be found in their appropriate alphabetical place. In the case of French, however, it will be necessary for the user to refer to the French alphabetical index in order to discover the appropriate serial numerical reference to the English term which is the equivalent of the italicised French word and so arrive at the appropriate definition(s).

In definitions in English, the use of (UK), (US), (Canada) or (Australia) after any particular definition indicates that the usage is confined to the country indicated; otherwise it should be understood that the definition is in general use. A similar distinction is drawn between French, French-Canadian and Belgian usage, between Spanish and Latin American usage and between German usage in the Federal and Democratic Republics and Austria.

Conscious of the limitations of the volume, its compilers hope that it may prove of use to archivists in every country to increase mutual comprehension of each other's usages and practices and that it may, in some measure, serve as model for and stimulate the publication of national glossaries in whatsoever language to assist archivists within any one country to understand better their own archives and their tasks. They also earnestly hope that their work has gone some further way along the road to dispelling 'the present confusion of terms', which the late T R Schellenberg in his book *The Management of Archives* (1965) so aptly said 'is simply the outward expression of an inward confusion of methods'.

This dictionary is also intended to help bridge the gap which continues to exist between archivists and records managers and their colleagues in the field of information science.

Finally, it is hoped that this work will help fill a long-standing need amongst the basic tools for the training and education of archivists and records managers and may also prove of value to users of records and archives.

The Chairman of the Working Party served as its secretary and as general editor of the glossary. To his colleagues on the Working Party and to those other correspondents who have helped in the stimulating work of compilation, he wishes to record his warmest thanks for their help, encouragement and sustenance.

The French text and index are the work of Mr Himly; the German equivalents and index that of Dr Franz; the Russian equivalents and index that of Mr Dolgih and the Spanish equivalents and index that of the late Mr Arago and Mrs Concepción Contel Barea. The Dutch equivalents and index were provided by Dr Eric Ketelaar and the Italian by Dr Elio Lodolini. These last two contributions were added after completion of the work of compilation.