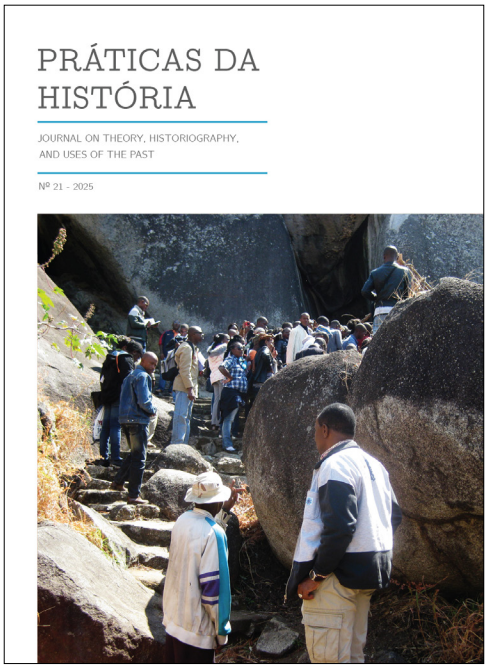


Unveiling Context: The Contribution of Documentary Typology Studies to Knowledge

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Documentary typology and archival identification are well-established fields within Archival Science that often generate theoretical confusion, despite employing distinct methodological approaches to retrieve documentary context and clarify the origins of records and collections. This essay draws on theoretical considerations and documentary examples to explain the distinctive features of each field, contributing to more contextualized access to archival materials. Provenance and record type play a central role, constituting the primary objects of study of archival identification and documentary typology, respectively — values also essential for historical research, as they illuminate individuals, institutions, and socio-historical circumstances. The article concludes that the interaction between these two fields enables productive associations in archival processing, benefiting both archival description and researchers by offering significant information about the historical context that shapes documentary evidence over time.
Keywords: documentary typology; archival identification; provenance; historical criticism.

Revelando o contexto: a contribuição dos estudos de tipologia documental para o conhecimento

Tipologia documental e identificação arquivística são campos bem estabelecidos da Arquivologia que costumam causar confusão teórica, apesar de empregarem recursos metodológicos próprios para a recuperação do contexto documental e a compreensão da origem de documentos e arquivos. Este ensaio busca, por meio de considerações teóricas e exemplos documentais, pontuar as especificidades de cada campo, colaborando com um acesso mais circunstanciado aos materiais arquivísticos. Proveniência e tipo documental assumem destaque por constituírem os objetos de estudo da identificação arquivística e da tipologia documental, respetivamente — valores igualmente preciosos para a pesquisa histórica, na medida em que colaboram para o conhecimento de sujeitos, instituições e conjunturas. Conclui-se que a interação entre estes dois campos possibilita associações produtivas na organização documental, beneficiando tanto o tratamento arquivístico quanto os pesquisadores ao longo do tempo.
Resumo: tipologia documental; identificação arquivística; proveniência; crítica histórica.

Unveiling Context: The Contribution of Documentary Typology Studies to Knowledge

por Sonia Troitiño

and Gabrieli Aparecida da Fonseca*

Considering documentary typology as a field of study aimed at understanding the historical circumstances and constraints that influence the creation of documents is both timely and necessary. This approach reclaims contextual information embedded in historical records, allowing for a more in-depth understanding of the record and the event it represents. From this perspective – and complementarily –, archival identification stands out as an important scientific method in archival practice, as it enables the recognition of a document's provenance and its form within distinct cultural contexts, supporting the representation, standardization, and retrieval of records and information.

The relationship between form,[1] the actual function of the record, the activity that generates it, and its grouping within a record

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1 The concept of form adopted here is linked to the idea of a documentary formula, combining discourse and documentary configuration. According to Heloísa Bellotto, "espécie [form], understood as the characteristic form of a document's drafting, in accordance with the nature and purpose of the information it contains, must align with certain functions of the producing entity". Heloísa Liberalli Bellotto, "O entendimento da espécie e do tipo documentais na teoria e na prática arquivísticas," *Officina: Revista da Associação de Arquivistas de São Paulo* 1, n.º 1 (2022): 12-13, https://doi.org/10.29327/263416.1.1-2.

series forms a record symbiosis that must be taken into account when representing information. Not infrequently, terminological imprecision regarding the terms: form, type, function, activity, record series, and even archive may lead to inconsistencies in document interpretation.

During the process of archival organization, the adoption of typology series as a basis for constructing record series allows for more accurate characterization of archival records – especially considering that such records convey information beyond what is explicitly stated, subtly referencing the circumstances of their production, circulation, and use, which makes them unique from the standpoint of human knowledge. Therefore, documentary typology has the potential to contribute to various other scientific fields, insofar as its studies provide new insights into historical records, their contexts, and – why not say it? – their contradictions.

It seems both appropriate and necessary to engage in a discussion on documentary typology studies, especially in light of their inherent challenges and complexities. In this essay, we aim to explore the contributions of documentary typology to knowledge construction, particularly through its potential to shed light on current understandings as well as to foster new discoveries about the historical context that shapes documentary testimonies over time.

One of the major benefits brought by documentary typology studies is their ability to surface underlying information, revealing the circumstances, influences, and constraints surrounding the act of documenting everyday life, as reflected in human records. In this sense, the focus is placed on the potential of documentary typology studies to contribute to knowledge development and construction.

As noted by Troitiño,[2] archives are simultaneously both an object and a source of knowledge, as they serve a dual function: on one hand, various scientific fields rely on archives and their materials to access information that enables a critical examination of facts and the construction

2 Sonia Troitiño, "Patrimônio documental e arquivologia: fundamentos para o reconhecimento e a organização de acervos permanentes" (tese de livre docência, Faculdade de Filosofia e Ciências, Universidade Estadual Paulista – Unesp, 2023).

of their own knowledge base; on the other hand, archival science itself produces a body of knowledge, largely grounded in the principle of provenance and the fonds theory – with all that these entail, such as information on organic relationships, authenticity, territoriality, and systems for record creation, among many other elements essential to understanding the document.

In the 1990s, the so-called "archival turn" marked a moment of transformation in the understanding of the role traditionally played by archives (custody), towards the expectation that was emerging at the dawn of the new millennium: knowledge production. This was not a movement of isolation, self-absorbed in Archival Science. It advocates expansion and interaction, previously unconsidered, in which archival work meets historiography in an interdisciplinary association of intense possibilities and mutual benefits.

The understanding of the principle of provenance – the conceptual matrix of Archival Science – is no longer static, seen only as defining the institution itself. This is because provenance carries marks that define and explain the existence of the person, physical or legal, in their environment. Thus, signs of cultural, political, economic experiences... in short, signs of life, are clearly perceptible in the preserved documentary traces, requiring only the use of good methodological choices for the retrieval of this information.

In this context, studies on the relationship between Memory, Archives, and History have sparked interest, gaining space in research by reconsidering the interactions and relevance between them, as well as the perception that there is a common scientific field to be explored. As proof of this, the important reflections shared by Pollack,[3] Halbwachs,[4] Pierre Nora,[5] Paul Ricoeur,[6] Peter Burke,[7] among others, stand out.

3 Michael Pollack, "Memória, esquecimento, silêncio", *Estudos Históricos* 2, n.º 3 (1989): 3-15; Michael Pollack, "Memória e identidade social", *Estudos Históricos* 5, n.º 10 (1992): 200-212.

4 Maurice Halbwachs, *A memória coletiva* (São Paulo: Vértice, 1990).

5 Pierre Nora, "Entre memória e história: a problemática dos lugares", trad. Yara Aun Khoury, *Projeto História: Revista do Programa de Estudos Pós-Graduados de História* 10 (1993): 7-28, https://revistas.pucsp.br/index.php/revph/article/view/12101.

6 Paul Ricoeur, *A memória, a história, o esquecimento* (Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 2007).

7 Peter Burke, *O que é história do conhecimento?* (São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2016).

With a different approach, studies such as those by Derrida[8] and Foucault[9] have also had a significant impact and influenced many of the research projects developed in this field. Revisionist initiatives have emerged, not only in historiographical production, but also in referential values.

In turn, Nesmith,[10] when asking "What's History Got to Do With It?," while reflecting on the place of historical knowledge in archival work, highlights the pendulum movement between Archival Science and History, from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 21st. The oscillation in the intensity of connections, according to the author, varied according to the understanding of the professional status of working in archives.

It is worth recalling that, in addition to the documents, those who organize the information and those who seek the information are part of the archives. This is an essential link in the proposition of preserving memory and constructing History.

Recently, Sara Callahan[11] reflected on the archival turn, seeking to understand its meaning, effects, and permanence after more than 30 years since the emergence of this perspective. She found that, although the movement is more than three decades old, it is still far from being finalized, due to its renewing potential. Consequently, it persists.

In this regard, we emphasize the importance of Archival Identification in recognizing the organic relationships across archival records, as well as the record production process and its role in understanding the event, record content, and the knowledge embedded within them.

However, it is essential to highlight the distinctions between Archival Identification and Documentary typology. We stress the importance of understanding the connections between these different fields of

8 Jacques Derrida, *Mal de arquivo: uma impressão freudiana* (Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 2001).

9 Michel Foucault, *A arqueologia do saber* (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Forense Universitária, 1987).

10 Tom Nesmith, "What's History Got to Do With It?: Reconsidering the Place of Historical Knowledge in Archival Work," *Archivaria* 57 (2004): 1-27, https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/12450.

11 Sara Callahan, "When the Dust Has Settled: What Was the Archiva Turn, and Is It Still Turning?," *Art Journal* 83, n.º 1 (2024): 74-88, https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.2024.2317690.

study and knowledge production, in order to dissect details pertaining to the context of record creation. This process brings to light information and meta-information related to the historical, political, and social circumstances in which the documents were produced.

To examine the applicability of typological analysis and archival identification methods, we incorporate into this discussion select sources from the *Historical Documents Collection* of the *Biblioteca Brasiliana Guita e José Mindlin* (BBM/USP, Brazil)[12] and the *Juízo dos Órfãos* fonds (held at the Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil). Through these materials, we propose a critical reflection on data extraction to capture the singularities of each historical moment, analyzing traces embedded in the documentation, in its structure, format, and vestiges of human agency.

Between Archival Identification and Knowledge: Possibilities Embedded in the Archival Context

Archival Identification is a preliminary activity in the processing and analysis of document collections. The literature presents it in different ways – sometimes understood as a method, other times as an archival function –, on which there is still no consensus within the field. Despite this uncertainty regarding the conceptualization of Archival Identification, the work processes that shape it are well-established and aligned with institutional studies, documentary typology, and the understanding of record genesis.

After all, record symbiosis is characterized by the interplay among form, the function of the record, the generating activity, and the record series. Within the document lies the manifestation of its record genesis, which embodies its essence and reason for existence. The documentary expression:

12 The documents presented here have been selected based on findings from the research project "Typological Study of the Biblioteca Brasiliana Guita e José Mindlin (BBM) Collection." Sonia Troitiño, *Estudo tipológico do acervo da Biblioteca Brasiliana Guita e José Mindlin (BBM) (Relatório científico)* (Programa de Residência em Pesquisa da Biblioteca Brasiliana Guita e José Mindlin (PRCEU/USP, 2020).

> [...] refers to the union between *actio* and *conscriptio*, which are the elements that compose the document. According to Bellotto (2002b, p. 33), while *actio* corresponds to the content of the document (implicit message, provenance, function, context, etc.), *conscriptio* refers to its physical form (medium, writing, validation marks, etc.), which is expressed through a form. The documentary tradition, according to Bellotto (2002b, p. 25), is understood as the *form* of the document, referring to the stage of preparation and transmission of a document (draft, original, copy).
>
> The form consists of the formal configuration of the document, as it is composed of the elements of *conscriptio*. It is the form that gives rise to the record type, which, in turn, corresponds to the characteristic that this form assumes according to the activity that generated it.[13]

Archival Identification and related studies are essential not only for record processing but also for understanding the broader context surrounding the production of documents. Record symbiosis also reflects the historical and geographical circumstances it both mirrors and is shaped by. As such, it constitutes an important tool for comparing social scenarios, going beyond the rigidity of protocols established for archival records.

> Based on the premise that every archival document necessarily records an activity within the specific function that gave rise to it, tracing the evolution of certain record types, by comparing their *formulae* across different periods over the centuries, can help reveal administrative and social continuities and ruptures – especially when the records in question relate to activities embedded in daily life, such as those produced by judicial bodies.

13 Gabrieli Aparecida da Fonseca, "Identificação documental em arquivos pessoais: possibilidades, convergências e desafios" (master's diss., Universidade Estadual Paulista – Unesp, 2017), 57, https://repositorio.unesp.br/server/api/core/bitstreams/edbb375d-3e5c-4df9-86b-2-afb72a030e75/content.

> In seeking to determine the extent to which documents of the same record type, produced in distinct historical moments, maintain the documentary standards upon which they are based, the use of typological analysis techniques in examining record series becomes fundamental. Equally important is the incorporation of concepts and methods from diplomatic criticism when the analysis focuses on the form. The application of a comparative method across different units within the same record series, produced one, two, or even three centuries apart, as the case may be, combined with typological and diplomatic analysis, provides an especially fruitful methodological approach from an investigative perspective. The outcome of such analysis, naturally, reveals how information is recorded in accordance with the functions and activities of the organizational structures responsible for record creation.[14]

In this regard, there is a connection between investigative practices preceding archival processing and knowledge itself, since knowledge dissemination and development depend on these practices to occur, given that documentary substance is itself an expression of knowledge.

Information representation in archival activities is fundamental to knowledge dissemination. Within the archival context, archival identification becomes elemental in this process, as it underpins classification, which, in turn, is foundational and inherent to knowledge construction and diffusion. This is especially critical in an increasingly digital institutional landscape, where technologies shape both record creation and archival processing.

It is noteworthy that classification also belongs to knowledge organization. It proves valuable for records creation across diverse areas, fields, or specific purposes, facilitating knowledge expansion and progress. Through its logical framework, classification renders explicit the contextual elements intrinsic to records. Thus, classification is both

14 Sonia Troitiño, "De la crítica diplomática al análisis tipológico: abordajes y técnicas de análisis documental," *Scire: Representación y organización del conocimiento* 17, n.º 1 (2011): 71, https://doi.org/10.54886/scire.v17i1.3998.

part of knowledge and a distinct field of knowledge, serving the expansion of and access to scientific understanding.

However, the relationship between archival documents and knowledge is not limited to their organization. A connection can also be observed in other situations, for example, in the potential influence these human testimonies may exert on their social role, or, through the application of information representation techniques, in their ability to provide interested parties with access to the content of the document. Likewise, through document processing, valuable information is provided for investigative purposes. As for the nuances of knowledge:

> It could be said that knowledge, as a relationship between thought and reality, has shifted three times within the framework of Western culture. In the first instance, the excellence of knowing does not lie in representation. The foundation of knowledge is ontological; the proximity between human beings and the world, within the order of being, precedes and legitimizes all predicative relations within the order of judgment. In a second moment, to know is to represent, and the world exists only insofar as it is represented. Here, the foundation of knowledge is consciousness. In a third moment, the represented—now the product of knowledge in its semiotic form—manifests itself as autonomous, independent of both the subject and the object of knowledge. At this point, the foundation of knowledge is language, a system of meanings or semiotic matter. The question of access to objects and reflection on the conditions of experience is replaced by the question of the *fatum* of language and the reflection on its conditions of interpretation.[15]

Records embody knowledge, not only in the form of formal, scientific, historical, or philosophical content, but also through residual

15 Maria Nélida González de Gomez, "A representação do conhecimento e o conhecimento da representação: algumas questões epistemológicas," *Ciência da Informação* 22, n.º 3 (1993): 2, https://revista.ibict.br/ciinf/article/view/479/479.

traces embedded in their documentary substance, which carry cultural elements, ethical or moral dimensions, among others.

Even when a record's structure is predetermined and consolidated within its form, records inevitably evolve across time and space, leaving discernible marks in their composition. As a result, similar record types or forms may exhibit formal distinctions despite sharing analogous structures. These variations reflect contextual differences tied to their temporal and spatial origins, as we will later demonstrate through selected examples. However subtle, such variations across record types can reveal a record's provenance, including its chronological and topical origins. As Maturana and Varela[16] remind us: "This interplay between action and experience [...] shows that **every act of knowing brings forth a world**. [...] All this can be encapsulated in the maxim: **all doing is knowing, and all knowing is doing.**"

It is essential to recognize that documents constitute both a means of acting upon and knowing the world, whose origin is also justified by the human need to remember.

Comparing and Differentiating: Archival Identification and Documentary Typology

Although Archival Identification and Documentary typology play central roles in the recognition of context, as well as in the identification and categorization of information, they must under no circumstances be regarded as synonymous. They refer to distinct concepts, with different functions, that coexist within applied archival science.

Archival identification may be considered, above all, an archival methodology, as it is tasked with identifying the elements that compose a record, based on archival principles. This methodology comprises various stages and phases, including: the study of provenance; process studies; the study of the institutional history and its documentation; typological recognition; among others.

16 Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, *A árvore do conhecimento: as bases biológicas da compreensão humana* (São Paulo: Palas Athena, 2001), 31-32, *emphasis added.*

> Archival identification is oriented toward an in-depth study of record genesis, in which the producing body and the record type are central. In other words, it enables the reconstruction of the context in which the records were produced, thereby contributing to the development of various archival procedures.[17]

Documentary typology, in turn, refers to the study of record types, which represent the configuration that a form assumes based on the activity that generated the document. To illustrate, consider the case of the commonly issued *certidões* (certificates): *certidão* is a form – it has standardized discourse, language, format, and well-defined production protocols, which result in perceptible similarities in its material characteristics. This form, when issued for a specific purpose, gives rise to distinct record types, such as birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates, and many other variations. Below is an example of a certificate, referring to the baptism of Feliz Brevis, issued in 1904 by the Bom Jesus do Brás Parish (Paróquia Bom Jesus do Brás – São Paulo, Brasil).

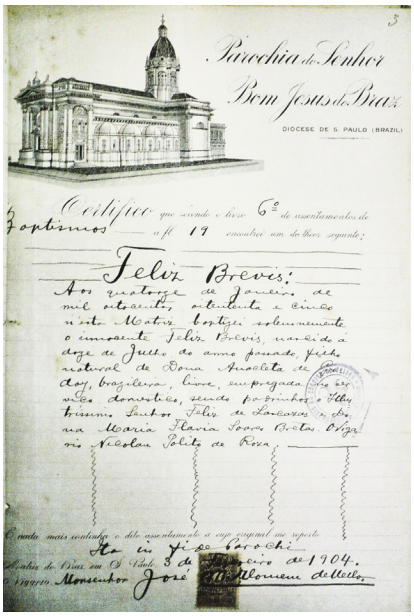


Figure 1. Certidão de Batismo de Feliz Breve, realizada em 14 de janeiro de 1885, na Paróquia do Senhor Bom Jesus do Brás (São Paulo, Brasil). Source: Juízo dos Órfãos de São Paulo Fonds. Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo (Brasil).

17 Fonseca, "Identificação documental," 11.

Upon examining the document above, we observe that it differs very little from baptism certificates issued today. This observation, beyond establishing the relationship between the documentary formula (*form*) and its function (baptism), reveals a certain stability of the record type over time. Even though minor differences may be found among documents of the same type produced across centuries, these variations usually pertain to content-related information – for instance, whether the baptized child or their mother was free or enslaved, a condition no longer present today – or even to the technology used to record the event, such as handwritten, printed, typewritten, or digital methods. Although these changes in the elaboration of the document are noteworthy and deserve attention, they rarely affect the documentary structure to the extent of reshaping the record type.

Documentary typology is a branch of Diplomatics concerned with the configuration each record type assumes once the form is applied to the activity that generated the document. In this way, it analyzes and defines how each record type should be shaped, based on its form and the activity that originated the record.

It is worth noting that the term Documentary typology stems from an Ibero-American tradition. Other scholars, such as Duranti,[18] refer to this diplomatic approach to archival documents as Archival Diplomatics or Contemporary Diplomatics – fields that are likewise concerned with record genesis, specifically focusing on the constitution of record types.

In the process of archival processing, especially when faced with a large volume of accumulated records, Archival Identification and Documentary typology may be applied simultaneously, thereby offering a stronger foundation for the organization of records. Each, within its own scope, investigates essential characteristics of the archival collection under analysis. In this way, it becomes possible to associate them, even though each retains its own identity and purpose.

While studies focused on the processes of record production and processing, both Identification and Documentary typology take the record and the actions surrounding it as their point of reference. The centrality of

18 Luciana Duranti, *Diplomática: usos nuevos para una antigua ciencia*, trans., prol. and pres. Manuel Vázquez (Carmona: S&C Ediciones, 1996).

the record in the analytical process allows for a deeper understanding of its origin and the event it represents. This constitutes a point of convergence between the two fields of study, one that may, at times, lead less specialized observers to conflate their applications.

The record, a key object for understanding the context of the actions that generated it, is a fundamental factor in the processes of knowledge construction. In fact, for Meyriat,[19] the record is understood as an object that provides structure to information, serving to communicate it continuously. The author also reminds us that:

> Any object may be assigned this function. For this reason, the notion of "record" is much broader than that of "writing." Written records are a privileged case, as writing is the most commonly used form to convey a message. However, it must be noted that writing can occur on many different objects: stones, ceramics, shells, parchment, paper, film... And one can write using different sign systems: alphabetic, phonetic, ideographic [...].[20]

In other words, there exists a wide variety of formats, media, genres, and form, all of which give rise to different record types. Consequently, postcards, photographs, musical scores, films, and microfiches are as much documents as letters or reports and, when used to reflect activities, they become archival records.

However, the record type, though often associated with the record itself, is not equivalent to the record. Rather, it is the representational expression conveyed by the record, resulting from the combination of its form and the activity that produced it.

> By relating and distinguishing record analysis from archival description, one must remember that the name of the record type (e.g., *consulta*, building permit file, letter, etc.) is one thing – and it

19 Jean Meyriat, "Documento, documentação, documentologia", trad. Camila Mariana A. da Silva *et al.*, *Perspectivas em Ciência da Informação* 21, n.º 3 (2016): 240-253, https://periodicos.ufmg.br/index.php/pci/article/view/22480.

20 Meyriat, "Documento," 241.

> does not aim to represent only the individual record unit – while the titles or names of record units require, in addition to the name of the record type, other complementary data for accurate representation (e.g., *consulta* of the Council of the Indies proposing a viceroy for New Spain; building permit file for the Guadalajara sports complex; letter from Santiago Carrillo to Fulano regarding...).[21]

From this perspective, the record type is understood as a model, a parameter established for the recognition of documents that share similar structures, signs, and markings. As a predefined standard, the record type is highly useful when we think in terms of assigning logic to information and organization of archival collections.

However, Bellotto[22] warns that a record does not exist in the abstract. There is something above the record type, the form, as "while the latter is linked to the roles and functions of the record's producer, the former is associated with its activities."

Without a doubt, form and record types form fundamental components of a record's foundation – comprised of *actio* and *conscription* – and, when analyzed through methods such as Archival identification, they reveal the context and function that characterize the document. This knowledge contributes to knowledge construction by enabling the systematization of information, events, and systems underlying written culture.

Following, we present a pair of selected records to demonstrate, in practical terms, how the study of record types and the application of Archival Identification can bring to light important aspects of a record and the social context in which it is embedded.

We begin this reflection with the *Diploma da Medalha Geral da Campanha do Paraguay* (BBM, s/d). This document, a printed form intended to attest to an honor awarded to those who fought in the Paraguayan War,[23] was meant to confirm ownership of the decoration

21 Antonia Heredia Herrera, "Em torno do tipo documental", trad. Sonia Troitiño, *Officina – Revista da Associação de Arquivistas de São Paulo* 1, n.º 1 (2022): 74, https://revista.arqsp.org.br/index.php/revista-da-associacao-de-arquivi/article/view/8.

22 Bellotto, "Entendimento da espécie," 11.

23 The Paraguayan War was an armed conflict between Paraguay and the so-called Triple

granted by the Brazilian government. The honor was materially composed of a medal and a silver clasp.

Upon analyzing the diploma below, one can observe that, despite being rich in information, it does not constitute an archival document, strictly speaking, for the simple reason that no record has actually been made. It is merely an unused form. Therefore, we can conclude that what we have in this example is a form, but not an actual record, due to the absence of a recorded event. It contains no names, dates, signatures, or seals. In short, there is no registered event, it is not a document that confirms the award, nor does it fulfill its intended evidentiary function. No documented activity has been identified.



Figure 2. Modelo do Diploma da Medalha Geral da Campanha do Paraguai, utilizado para condecorar os combatentes que participaram do conflito armado, episódio conhecido no Brasil como Guerra do Paraguai (1864-1870). Source: Coleção Documentos Históricos. Biblioteca Brasiliana Guita e José Mindlin (BBM/USP)

Alliance, formed by Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, which took place between 1864 and 1870.

For the next analysis, a marriage petition processed by the *Juízo de Órfãos de São Paulo* was selected. This is a particularly interesting document, as it bears traces of two distinct events that converge at the moment of its documentary record.

The primary function of this document was to obtain, from the orphans' judge, the proper authorization for minors to marry before reaching the age of emancipation – considering that, in 19th-century Brazil, one of the legal means of obtaining emancipation was precisely through marriage. Without the appropriate exemption, it was not possible to enter into matrimonial vows. The process unfolded according to legally established procedures, ultimately authorizing the marriage upon confirmation that the minor's well-being would be safeguarded as a result of their new social status.

Simultaneously, the document bears signs of the structural political changes Brazil was undergoing at the time. November 15, 1889, marks the official date of Brazil's transition from an Empire to a Republic. As a consequence, all government offices and administrative structures underwent organizational and nominal changes. Since this document records a procedure carried out in 1890, we can observe in its printed form certain adjustments that reveal the broader political transition occurring throughout the public administration. For example, the phrase "*Juízo de Órfãos da Imperial Cidade de São Paulo*" was altered to "Juízo de Órfãos da Cidade de São Paulo". This change in nomenclature was implemented simply by manually striking through the word "*imperial*" with a handwritten bar, effectively suppressing it.

Some important points can be observed: 1) the adjustment of the formulaic discourse in order to meet the new reality that arises; 2) the use of printed forms used to register documents; 3) the most important aspect is the stability and permanence of the record type even in the face of major political and cultural changes.

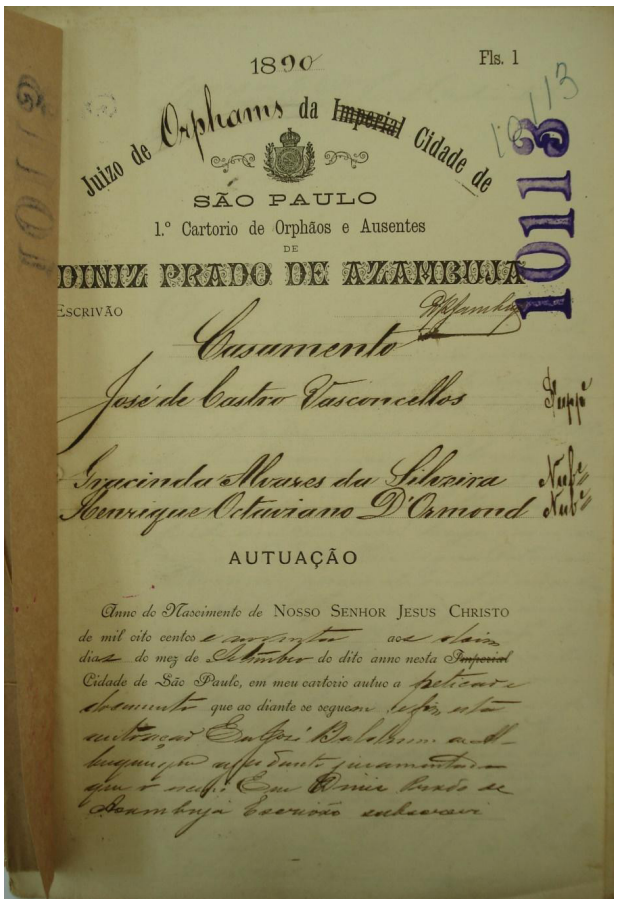


Figure 3. Petição de casamento de Gracinda Alvarez da Silveira e Henrique Octaviano D'Ormond, apresentada em 1890, pelo tutor José de Castro Vasconcellos ao Juiz de Órfãos da Comarca de São Paulo (Brasil), solicitando autorização para a celebração das núpcias dos menores. Source: Juízo dos Órfãos de São Paulo Fonds. Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo (Brasil).

Undeniably, a record belongs to and reflects its provenance. Nevertheless, as historical heritage, it is inseparably linked to the common good and to society, insofar as it offers unique forms of knowledge. Documentary typology and Archival Identification help us access this latent information.

Some Points Worth Considering

Ultimately, typological studies, such as Archival Identification and Documentary typology, interact with one another and enable associations that support archival processing. These interactions also benefit

archival research and knowledge construction both from and for documentary sources.

The clarification of record content provided by typological studies allows us to comprehend historical change in relation to a given period, location, and even cultural or linguistic issues. This highlights records as social instruments shaped by the contexts in which they are embedded, while at the same time possessing structural features capable of reflecting such contexts. It is also important to remember that records serve as portraits and references of mechanisms of social articulation, insofar as their documentary configuration – conceived through the framework of their form and the activity that generated them – can either facilitate or hinder certain actions.

The records analyzed in this study demonstrated the documentary structures that shape record series, as well as their relationship to the purposes they serve, the reason for their existence. We can also identify variations that result from the activity or motivating action. Moreover, these documentary sources allow us to reflect on the transformations undergone by record types over time, particularly as a result of changes in political systems and historical context. Undoubtfully, these are traces of knowledge present in the records themselves, through which we reflect and from which we expand our understanding.

Nesmith states that

> a record is an evolving mediation of understanding about some phenomenon – a mediation created by social and technical processes of inscription, transmission, and contextualization [...] And an archive is an ongoing mediation of understanding of records (and thus phenomena), or that aspect of record making which shapes this understanding through such functions as records appraisal, processing, and description, and the implementation of processes for making records accessible.[24]

24 Tom Nesmith, "Reopening Archives: Bringing New Contextualities into Archival Theory and Practice," *Archivaria* 60 (2006): 262, https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/12523.

This is an essential understanding when carrying out historical criticism, as in addition to being sensitive to the set of phenomena that help explain the existence of the documentary record of a given event, it provides explanation of the criteria and references used in the archival organization process and, therefore, the logic necessary for the retrieval of sources. In short, archival organization seeks the contextualization of records, and this is the same principle to be employed to obtain detailed access to documentary sources.

In this sense, knowing and distinguishing the methods used by archival identification and documentary typology, as well as the knowledge they produce, is profoundly useful to the historian, considering the great contribution they provide to the understanding of sources, their context of production and use.

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