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The process of creating archival science: a corpus-based discourse analysis of attitudes and approaches towards other institutions within the field of cultural heritage during the end of the 20th century

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Archival science is a young academic discipline, and the form and content are still under discussion. Archival science in the modern sense started being formed in the late 20th century, i.e. during a time known for quick technological advancements and increasing focus on interdisciplinarity (Duranti & Franks, 2015, pp. 84–86; Henttonen, 2023, pp. 63–68; Klein & Frodeman, 2017, pp. 146–147).

The archival profession and science have been deeply influenced by adjacent disciplines, such as historical and library sciences, (Gilliland et al., 2016, pp. 81–82; Henttonen, 2023, p. 64; Shepherd, 2017, pp. 176–177) and attempting to carve out an identity of ones' own would necessarily entail addressing this. It was something of a paradoxical process where actors within the archival profession attempted to break off from other disciplines and create and highlight an identity of their own during a time of increasing interdisciplinarity. This process has not been widely studied in general, nor with the perspectives and methods used in this study – much has been published about archival science itself, as well as discourses in or surrounding it, but much less about the active creation of what came to be known as archival science, especially in a way that centers the actors and agency of those who contributed to this process (Couture & Doucharme, 2005, pp. 48–49; Shepherd, 2017, pp. 174–176).

The study is a corpus-based discourse analysis (CADS) that focuses on this process, specifically the approach towards closely affiliated organizations and the disciplines associated with them in the field of cultural heritage when attempting to carve out an independent academic identity. The purpose was to identify and highlight approaches to and discourse surrounding these organizations and the associated disciplines, as well as possible variations in these. For suitable demarcation for a study of this size the search areas were limited to the so called (G)LAM-sector, i.e. libraries, museums, and galleries.

The corpus consisted of the English texts published in the journal *Archivaria* from 1987–2003. *Archivaria* was chosen as it was a meaningful international forum where prominent researchers published frequently, and The Association of Canadian Archives, which publishes *Archivaria*, published educational guidelines as early as 1976, which by 1992 had developed into ACA's Education Programme and Plan. The publisher of *The American Archivist*, Society of American Archivist, did not publish similar guidelines until 1996 (Duranti & Franks, 2015, p. 44). The number of texts used for this study was 887, as 48 texts in other languages were excluded, as presented in the figure 1.

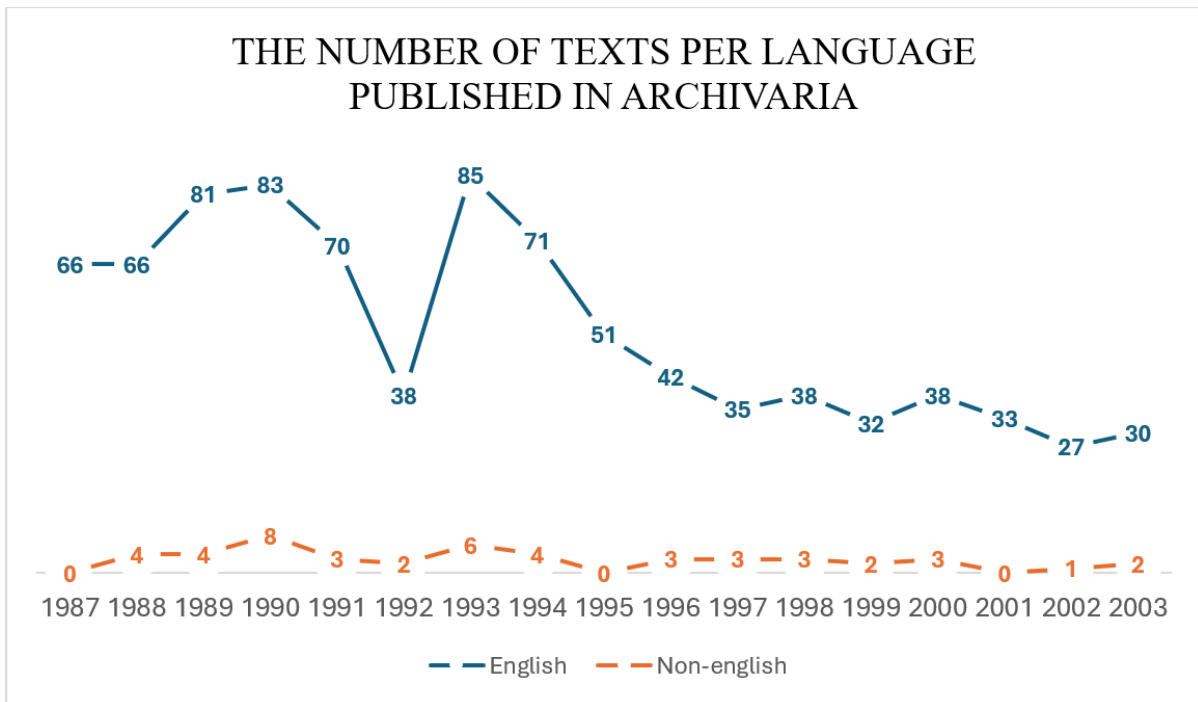


Figure 1: The number of texts per language published in Archivaria.

The method used was two-fold: a quantitative analysis to analyze the frequency and context of the search terms, and a qualitative analysis of a select number of texts chosen based on the quantitative analysis. This enables the use of larger data sets that do not wholly really on close reading, meaning the analysis transitions from distant reading with the quantitative analysis to close reading with the qualitative analysis. It becomes a so-called double reading (Salmi, 2020, pp. 30–37).

For the quantitative analysis, i.e. the corpus analysis, a corpus and text analysis toolkit called AntConc is used. The freeware was developed by Anthony Laurence at Waseda University (Laurence, 2023). It lets you create your own corpus by uploading articles and searches the texts for the terms you enter. It shows in which file which word was used, as well as the context, and allows you to visualize the frequency of the terms per article, as well as where in the file the hits are.

AntConc allows truncated searches, so the terms used for the search were libr*, museu*, museo*, and galler*. Libr* was used to catch variations and conjugations of the word library; museu* for museum but to exclude words such as must or muse; museo* to include museology, and galler* to catch gallery and galleries but exclude words like galley.

The corpus analysis showed a significant number of mentions of two of the search areas, especially libraries. Museum also featured prominently, but the total amount of mentions

was less than half when compared to libraries. Mentions of galleries were few, and it was thus excluded from the qualitative part of the study. (Figure 2.)

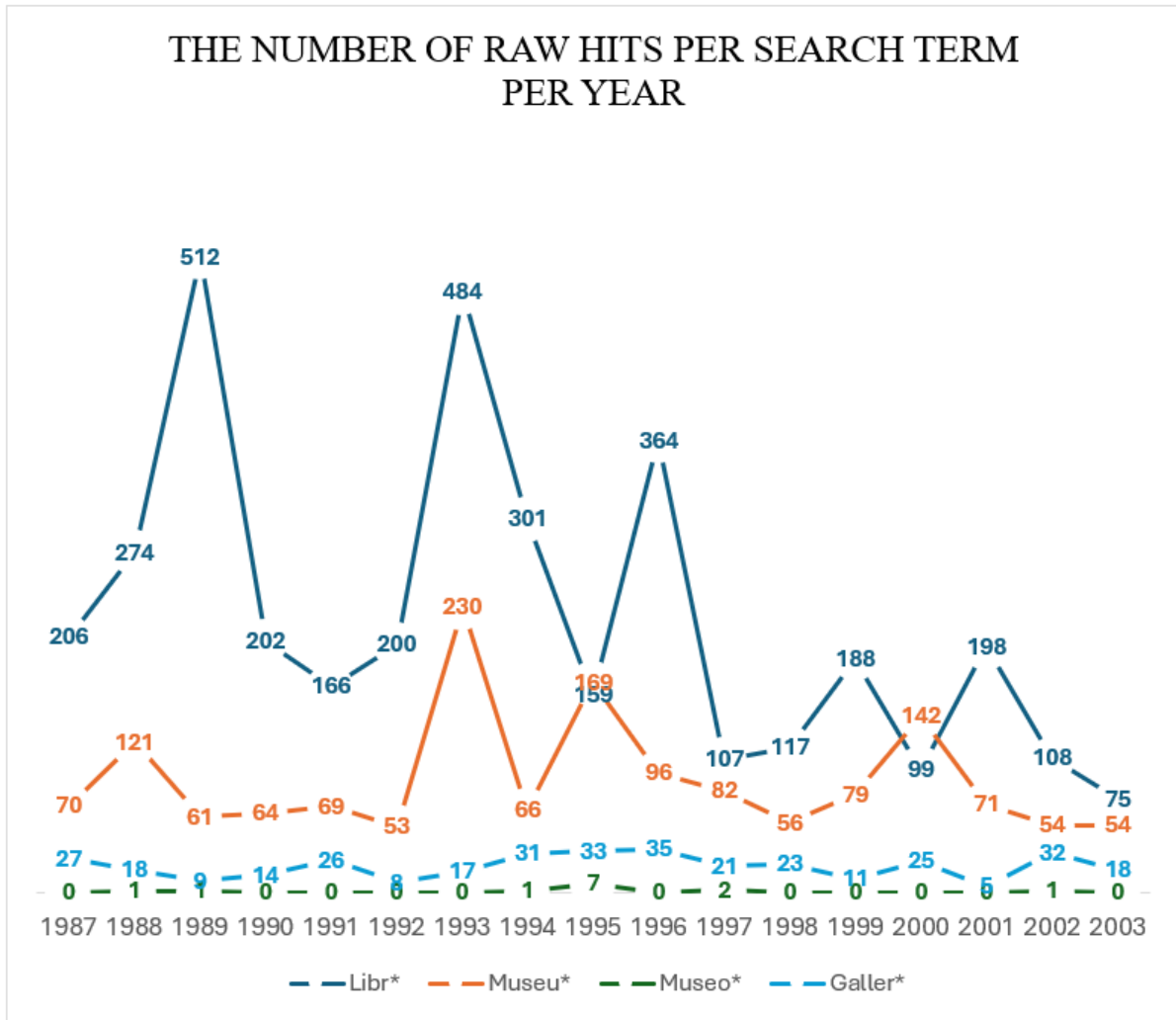


Figure 2: The number of raw hits per search term per year.

The end of the 1980s and beginning of 1990s gave the highest amount of raw hits, but when an average was calculated in relation to the number of texts published per year, which varied greatly, the result was more evenly distributed (figure 3).

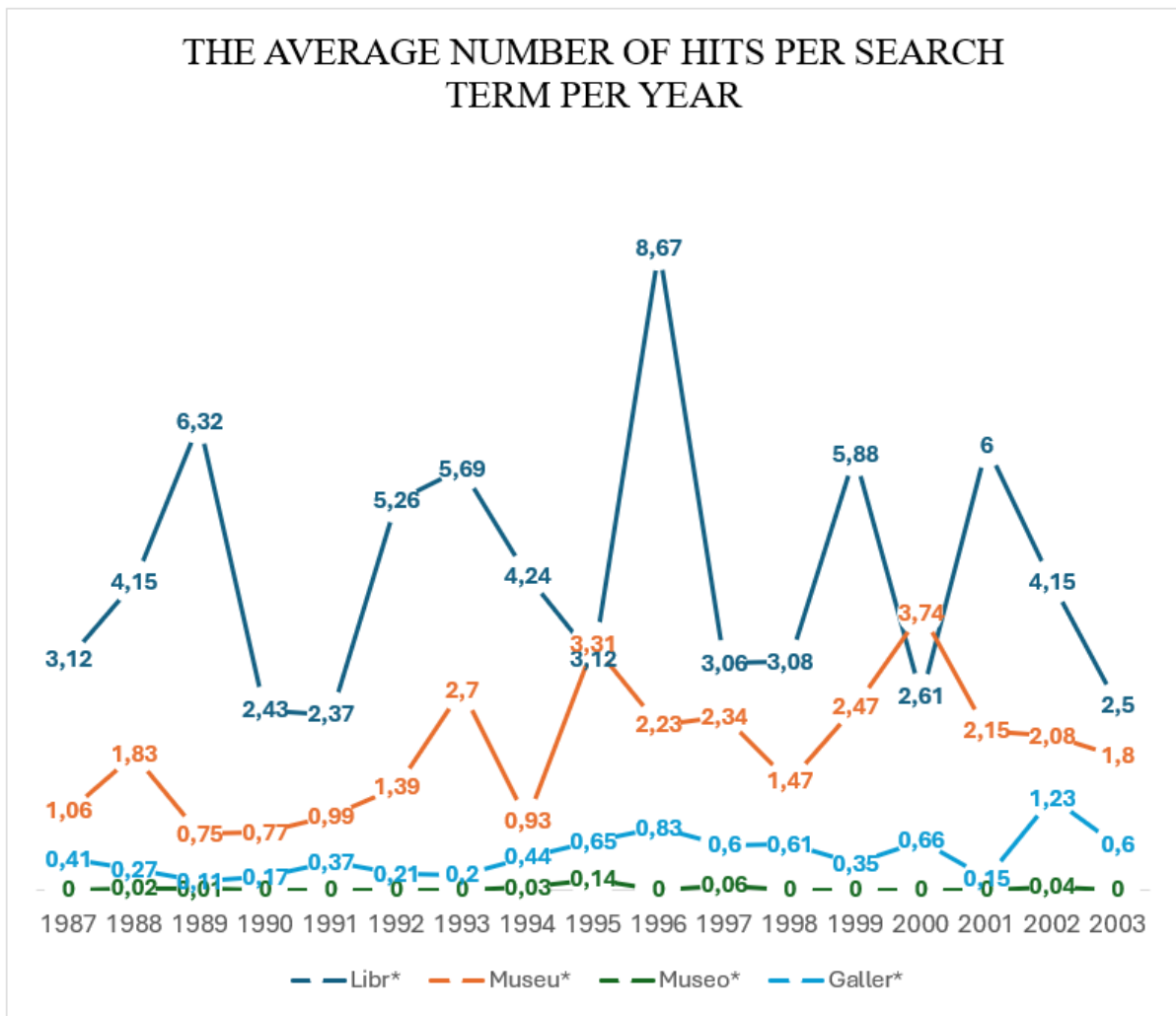


Figure 3: the average number of hits per search term per year.

Based on the quantitative analysis, five texts were chosen for the qualitative analysis, i.e. the discourse analysis. They were selected based on the raw frequency of the search words *libr** and *museu**; the five with the highest number of mentions were selected, as shown in the table 1.

Table 1: the texts chosen for the qualitative analysis.

Heading of the text:	Author:	Published:	Raw frequency (libr* & mu-seu*):
The War of Independence of Archivists	Elio Lodolini	1989	121
Integrating New Paraprofessionals into an Old Profession	Wendy M. Duff	1994	119
Limited Identities for a Common Identity: Archivists in the Twenty-First Century	Jean-Pierre Wallot	1996	112
Professional Convergence: New Bindings, Old Pages	George Bolotenko	1988	85
The Role of the Museum Archivist in the Information Age	Shelley McKellar	1993	75

The discourse analysis showed active debate and polemic regarding especially libraries; the relationship between archives and libraries was portrayed as distorted and toxic. Libraries were “the proverbial stepmothers” and archives in a library structure were operating in “hostile” bodies” as well as being subjected to library imperialism (Bolotenko, 1988, pp. 133–135), there was a “war of independence of archivists” (Lodolini, 1989), as well as copious discussion about differences between what an archivist and librarian does, as well as how libraries and archives have and can navigate technological advancements in the information age without converging too much or giving up their unique identities (Bolotenko, 1988; Duff, 1994; Lodolini, 1989; McKellar, 1993; Wallot, 1996).

The results from the study were rich in content, and they help contextualize and explain developments in the field of cultural heritage that are ongoing even to this day. Libraries and archives being lumped together or not widely understood is not a uniquely modern problem, and the study shows that there was a clear recognition of this and a perceived need for the archivists to firmly create and uphold an academic discipline of their own, with academic

representation and unique theoretical foundations. The study suggests ample opportunities for further study, for example by widening the search areas, timeframe, or including other journals.

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