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INFORMATION AS PROOF OR MONUMENT: MATERIALITY, INSTITUTIONALITY AND REPRESENTATION

Informação como prova ou monumento: materialidade, institucionalidade e representação

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Our aim is to analyze information as proof or monument from an interdisciplinary perspective, so as to perform a reflection on epistemological and political implications in terms of representation from the consideration of information materiality and institutionality.

Methods: a brief review of literature facing various forms of knowledge in Information Science, as well as documental, judiciary, historiographical, archival and diplomatic perspectives, which find in the document their theoretical, methodological, and operational subsidies. The selection of authors in the approached files follows the path of those presenting significant contributions in French-language theoretical perspectives.

Results: The transformation of materialized “evidence” in an institutionalized “thing” amidst the “proof” assumes: a) subjects with some authority; b) a document bringing together epistemological and political dimensions summarized in their permanent and material (support) condition, and its ephemeral and immaterial (pragmatic and symbolic) condition.

Conclusions: The epistemological and political implications of representation modes are brought to light facing the statements: a) “the document, if authentic, leads to the truth”, guiding “information as proof” towards the representation of social reality; and b) “every document is a monument”, guiding the “information as monument” towards legitimizing discourses *about* reality.

KEYWORDS: Information. Document. Materiality. Proof. Monument. Representation. Archive.

RESUMO

Objetivo: Analisar a informação como prova ou monumento a partir de uma perspectiva interdisciplinar, para, especificamente, realizar uma reflexão sobre as implicações epistemológicas e políticas em modos de representação a partir da consideração da materialidade e da institucionalidade da informação.

Método: Lança mão de revisão de literatura não exaustiva mediante saberes da ciência da informação, bem como das perspectivas documental, judiciária, historiográfica, arquivística e diplomática que encontram no documento seus subsídios teóricos, metodológicos e operacionais. A seleção dos autores dos campos abordados segue a trilha daqueles que apresentam contribuições significativas em perspectivas teóricas francófonas.

Resultado: A transformação da “evidência” materializada em “coisa” institucionalizada e em meio de “prova” pressupõe: a) sujeitos com alguma autoridade, b) documento que congrega dimensões epistemológica e política sintetizadas em sua condição perene e material (suporte) e efêmera e imaterial (pragmática e simbólica).

Conclusões: As implicações epistemológicas e políticas de modos de representação são evidenciadas mediante os enunciados: a) “o documento, quando autêntico, leva à verdade”, orientador da “informação como prova” para representação da realidade social; e b) “todo documento é um monumento”, orientador da “informação como monumento” para a legitimação de discursos *sobre* a realidade.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Informação. Documento. Materialidade. Prova. Monumento. Representação. Arquivo.

1 INTRODUCTION

As one thinks of information as proof or monument, one assumes the existence of at least three comprising aspects: materiality, institutionality, and representation. The conceptual proposal Michael Buckland brings in his text "Information as thing" leads to an elucidating path, albeit only introducing, toward the comprehension of these three aspects.

In Buckland's view, the main study object of Information Science is the information registered and contained within a storage and retrieval system. This type of information presents one of its main virtues: materiality or perpetuity on a support, which causes it to differ from the ephemeral and immaterial dimension of information as "process" (communication) and as "knowledge" (cognition) (BUCKLAND, 1991).

Therefore, Buckland's conceptual proposal assumes information institutionalization or evidence registered and organized in a system so as to allow its retrieval, access and use. He found in the word "thing" a term to, according to him, better define that type of information. The materialized and institutionalized content – "information as thing" – also finds meaningful expression in the object valued as document or monument (BUCKLAND, 1997; MEYRIAT, 1981).

Document can be understood, from Paul Otlet's contributions, as an object in itself, mention of the object in classification, general catalog making the inventory of objects or as part of given collections or catalog of documents concerning things (BUCKLAND, 1997, p. 805). It is comprised of objects expressed in graphic and written registers representing ideas or any material form of expression of human thought,¹ which interests documentation for rational organization of registered knowledge.

Document, according to Suzanne Briet on a concept credited to a "contemporary bibliographer concerning clarity",² "is a proof sustaining a fact."³ She also adds: "it is every concrete or symbolic index, preserved or registered, so as to represent, reconstitute or prove a physical or intellectual phenomenon."⁴ From Briet's contributions, materiality (support), intentionality (object as evidence), processing (transformation into document),

¹ "Choses elles mêmes", "La mention de chose dans la classification", "Le catalogue général inventoriant les choses en elles-mêmes ou appartenant à des collections déterminées", "le catalogue (général ou particulier) de documents relatifs aux choses." (OTLET, 1934, p. 373).

² "bibliographe contemporaine soucieuse de claret" (BRIET, 1951, p. 7).

³ "une preuve à l'appui d'un fait." (BRIET, 1951, p. 7).

⁴ "Tout indice concret ou symbolique, conservé ou enregistré, aux fins de représenter, de reconstituer ou de prouver un phénomène ou physique ou intellectuel." (BRIET, 1951, p. 7).

and phenomenological position (individual/interpreter's perception) are conditions to the transformation of the object into document (BUCKLAND, 1997, p. 806).

Monument is the document from the "scientific, historical or aesthetic" point of view, "as are architectural works, created by man, old or new, well-preserved or ruined."⁵ Furthermore, it features the characteristics of "connecting to the power of perpetuation, whether willing or unwilling, of historical societies (a legacy to collective memory) and of resending to testimonies of which only a minimum part is in writing." (LE GOFF, 2013, p. 486).

Among informational values attributed to the document, values of proof or monument differ for expressing, among other aspects, representation modes. They find reference in the tradition started with the documentation Otlet founded, concerning materiality and institutionality of the document, deepened by outstanding works such as Briet's, whose merit in interpretation, in particular, is acknowledged especially for making room for symbolic indexicality of the object as a means of representation.

In its interpretational diversity, the concept of information can be approached in objective or physical dimensions, subjective or cognitive, and social or pragmatic, which Rafael Capurro called paradigms (CAPURRO, 2007, p. 11-29). Before approaching the first and second dimensions as a form of exemplifying the fundamentals of representation modes, one should point out the differences in manners of objectification of information made by subjects who hold some sort of authority.

Every system for information storage and retrieval provides some proof, whose objectification can be: a) primary: by one producing the information (object of organization and retrieval); b) secondary: by one producing information about information (means or tools to organize and retrieve; metadata); or c) tertiary: by one using the retrieved information.

One can interpret such manners of objectification (in the case, as originators of proof) as a message in Shannon & Weaver's communicational model, in which they are considered sender, channel, and recipient (CAPURRO, 2007). The reception of the message, if there is no noise in the channel – system or technology – takes place objectively (COURTRIGHT, 2007). In this situation, the information proves the subjects' intent to objectify producing and intermediating the message.

⁵ "scientifique, historique ou esthétique. Ainsi les œuvres d'architecture, créées par l'homme, anciennes ou nouvelles, à l'état conservé et à l'état de ruine. Ainsi également les sites naturels." (OTLET, 1934, p. 359).

This communicational model brings a structuring referential for the objective or physical paradigm of information. From the model's assumption, reaffirming the initial argument in the text, the passage from "evidence" (physical) to "thing" (in a system) and then to the means of "proof" finds its parallel in their comprising elements, i.e. materiality, institutionality, and representation. Such elements are foreseen in the principle of organization of documents Otlet proposed, considering "reality" (objects), "reproduction of reality" (documents), and "writing about a reproduction of reality" (representation modes).⁶

The intent of objectivity, on the other hand, does not make the implications involved in the aforementioned fragment evident. It tends to obliterate politically engaged pieces of knowledge assumed in informational practices, such as: selection (identification, choice, and validation of material evidence), insertion into the system and technical treatment (transforming evidence into "thing"), and knowledge with technical, scientific or another (judging and validating the *something* to be proven) authority.

Among possible questionings to this scheme of representation, the consideration of the pragmatic dimension and the knowledge/power relation serves as an interpretational means in the ambit of the social dimension of information. Such alternative makes room for ethical dilemmas and implications, political tensions, economical interests, and epistemological constructions in institutions and disciplines (MURGUIA, 2014).

The pragmatic dimension takes place from the acknowledgment of the central role of language. Such centrality made way for the study of communicative relations and the production of meaning (DERVIN; NILAN, 1986), according to which subjects realize informational agencies within a given social and institutional context (RABELLO, 2017).

Knowledge/power relation (DREYFUS; RABINOW, 1983) is a deepened construct in genealogical formulations⁷ approached, among other occasions, when Michel Foucault pointed out, firstly, the relations between the biological knowledge and the modern power and, secondly, the role of human and social sciences for the study of the formation of disciplinary technologies of the body.

In theory, while the objective dimension of information prioritizes intentions of representation *of* reality (emphasis in the proof/authenticity value), the social dimension criticizes pragmatic and symbolic aspects comprised and comprising discourses *about*

⁶ "Réalité". "Reproduction de la réalité". "Ecrit sur une reproduction de la réalité". (OTLET, 1934, p. 272-373).

⁷ The genealogy is characterized by the prioritization of practice before theory. In this, the investigator is not comprised as a spectator disconnected from mute discursive monuments. There is a concern towards particularities in social practices, as well as the "bio-power" comprehended in a group of historical practices producing human objects systematized by structuralism and human subjects explained by hermeneutics. (DREYFUS; RABINOW, 1983, p. 103).

reality (found in the monumentality value). As both conceptual keys are beyond the informational field, their investigation requires an interdisciplinary analysis perspective.

This paper aims to analyze the social dimension of information as proof or monument from an interdisciplinary perspective, considering contributions from judiciary, historiographical, archival, and diplomatic knowledge, in addition to the pieces of knowledge so far approached found in the theoretical body of information science and documentation. From such a perspective, we seek, specifically, to perform a reflection on epistemological and political implications in representation modes from the consideration of information materiality and institutionality.

With no pretense of performing an in-depth review of literature, the selection of the authors in the approached fields follows the path of those presenting significant contributions in French-language theoretical perspectives, most of which consulted in translated publications, with argumentation centered in the following references:

- Information Science and documentation, with theoreticians such as Paul Otlet (Belgian), Suzanne Briet (French), or those, in this tradition, outlining the domains of neo-documentation, as Jean Meyriat (French) and Michael Buckland (an Englishman residing in the USA).
- French historiography of the *Annales*, with theoreticians such as Marc Bloch (French), or with those who, unfurling from this tradition, comprised the *nouvelle histoire*, such as the French authors Paul Ricœur and Jacques Le Goff, and the Polish author Krzysztof Pomian.
- Innovating Jean Mabillon's classic French diplomatic tradition, with theoreticians such as Luciana Duranti (Italian, residing in Canada), whose works contributed to contemporary Diplomatics and Archival Studies.
- Post-structural theoreticians in the path of the *Annales'* advances, such as the French philosopher Michel Foucault, whose extract for this paper touches part of the contributions on judiciary knowledge and document/monument and knowledge/power relations. Foucault's knowledge/power relation was also approached by Canadian theoreticians from the field of Archival Studies: Terry Cook and Joan Schwartz.

Therefore, we will observe knowledge in the fields finding in the document their theoretical, methodological, and operational subsidies. In this direction, the archive and the archive document will be treated, in different moments, as inflection and starting points.

2 JUDICIARY AND HISTORIOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE

In 1973, Michel Foucault presented five conferences at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, when he dealt with the link between systems of truth and social and political practices. The conferences were published only in Portuguese in the book called *A verdade e as formas jurídicas*, which could be translated as “Truth and juridical forms.”

Judiciary knowledge brought the interpretative horizon by means of which Foucault could identify, historically and methodologically, systems of proof (*épreuve*), of inquiry (*enquête*) and of exam (*examen*). He sought, particularly, to comprehend forms of truth and modes of social and political control in the capitalistic society of the 19th century, aiming to obtain subsidies for the reformulation of the theory of the subject.

Through this trajectory, Foucault identified a variety of judiciary systems – “of archaic proof”, “of archaic inquiry”, “of (Germanic) medieval proof”, of medieval (or inquisitive) inquiry” – found in different moments and territories of the so-called western societies. But Foucault wonders what contribution the juridical forms make to the constitution of particular pieces of knowledge since the middle of the Modern Age (FOUCAULT, 2009).

From the 14th and 15th centuries, a group of carefully collected testimonies in the field of geography, astronomy and climate knowledge stand out. These testimonies helped in efforts towards exerting power added to the acquisition of knowledge tooled for, for instance, the discovery of the American continent.

Advances in other areas of knowledge in the 16th and 17th centuries, such as medicine, zoology, and botanic, are also attributed to using the inquiry system as a tool. With such procedure, the real power stood out before the taxing and control of wealth, resources and currency circulation. This system propelled the continuity of political powers and the arising of sciences in the 17th and 18th centuries such as political economics and statistics (FOUCAULT, 2009, p. 75).

In some cases, the formation of knowledge domains took place, among other aspects, with the overlapping of the system of proof (facing material proofs) onto the system of inquiry (confronting testimonies, benefitted by the inquirer’s authority and rhetoric). This is the case of the alchemic knowledge and the knowledge by dispute (or *disputatio*).

The alchemic knowledge was guided by procedures based on (secret or public) rules, which directed how to act, what principles to respect, what prayers to say, what books to read, what codes to respect. That knowledge was structured and obeyed judiciary models of proof, which estranged naturalist, botanic, mineralogy, and philology knowledge following the “inquiry system.” (FOUCAULT, 2009, p. 76).

The knowledge by dispute was characterized as the knowledge transmission mode in university at the end of the Middle Ages. It featured the adoption of rituals aiming toward the opposition between inquiry and proof. There was verbal confrontation between two opponents who appealed to the authority and authentication following the general scheme of proof, but adopting the “inquiry system” which required using the authors “no longer as authority, but as testimony.” (FOUCAULT, 2009, p. 77).

The notion of document synthesized a testimonial and proof means in the scientism of the 19th century. Using the document as a means to operationalize the writing of history, the historiography of that century represented especially the foucaultian “exam”, characterized by the mixture of inquiry and proof systems in the 18th century. The documental phase of memory, presented by historian Paul Ricœur, brings elements elucidating this possible fusion. According to Ricœur, this phase is comprised of three complementing procedures: testimony, archive, and documental proof (RICŒUR, 2000).

Oral testimony is characterized by the expression of speech, declared memory or uttered testimony. The speech represents the institution of “natural memory”, hence bringing forth “artificial memory”, which can be thought from literary production, in its documental, scientific, or fictional expressions. It also concerns a type of propaedeutic to build sources for archiving and its use as proof.

Archiving is an expression of “artificial memory”. It is a practice with technical benchmarking allowing the certification of authenticity of the narrative uttered by the author (declarer or accumulator) in a personal or institutional context. It is characterized, furthermore, by systematic ordering documents in a given institution.

There is, in fact, the enrichment or empowering of the speech of the testimonial as it allows the speech to be placed in a contradictory situation regarding other documents. Pieces of archival knowledge allow the reconstitution of the “functional biography” of the registers facing their original disposition from an identifiable provenance.⁸

⁸ In clear allusion to the archival provenance principle.

The archived source can serve as proof for written history (historiography) or to fundament an action at court to issue a sentence (judiciary context). It can be considered a “sum of indications and of testimonies, whose final broadness meets that of the initial trace.”⁹ This notion of trace includes, also, the indication as “non-written testimony,” whether natural or artificial, but contained in a support.

Documental proof assumes an articulation of the documental phase to explanatory, comprehensive and literary phases of representation, using cognitive and institutional authority of one who interprets and validates the document as proof. The archival or development procedures of collection in institutions will be responsible for the search or maintenance of authenticity of the documents.

The authenticity of archival documents is significant for the fields of knowledge that find proof value of the document in the belief of access to juridical, administrative, or historical truth, in a representation mode intended to be scientific. Since the prelude of scientism, the archive served as a privileged space for assessment and validation of authenticity for the documents therein stored, considering the study of documental form, among other practices.

3 ARCHIVE AND DOCUMENTAL FORM

The root of the word ‘archive’ (*arkhé*) for the French philosopher Jacques Derrida join the “ontological” (origin, toward memory and history) or “nomological” (order, command, law) meanings, within a juridical or historiographical context. Such meanings can be analyzed in juridical and historiographical knowledge and institutionalities, as well as archival and diplomatic ones (DERRIDA, 2008).

Two historical understandings of archive help clarifying things. In the ancient or Greco-Roman understanding, *archeion* named places of proof and disclosure of official documents. In the medieval understanding, the Latin derivation *archivum* corresponded to the space where the Catholic Church places the document with proof value (SILVA, 1999; FAVIER, 2001).

The archive, as a social phenomenon, is an object of interest for Archival Studies, which takes on, among other aspects, the management of documents with administrative, juridical or historical values (MULLER; FEITH; FRUIN, 1973; CASANOVA, 1928;

⁹ “somme des indices et des témoignages, dont l’amplitude finale rejoint celle initiale de la trace.” (RICŒUR, 2000, p. 222).

SCHELLENBERG, 1975). Such values guide toward considering the evidentiary nature of the archival document.

The evidentiary nature of the archival document is expressed in its tooling, linked to the producing entity's logic, which ensures it the condition to reflect on the originating action. Hence, the storage and organization of such groups in these institutions are justified by the document's "registering an action" (DURANTI, 1994).

The archive as a place that provides contacts with the proof of registered actions goes back to Hilary Jenkinson's contributions in her 1922 book *A manual of archive administration*. It describes properties found in documents from archives whose register is produced in order to perform a given action/function in an administrative context. Such properties are comprehended and adapted by Luciana Duranti as follows:

- Impartiality: "[An understanding] according to which archives are inherently truthful, makes them the most reliable source for both law and history, whose purposes are to rule and explain the conduct of society by establishing the truth."
- Authenticity: "They are created credible and reliable by those who need to act through them. They are maintained with proper guarantees for further action and for information. And [they are preserved and being kept] by their creator or legitimate successor as [written memorials of past activities]."
- Naturalness: "The fact that archival documents are not contrived outside the direct requirements of the conduct of affairs – that is, that they accumulate naturally, progressively, and continuously."
- Interrelationship: "archival documents are linked among themselves by a relationship that arises at the moment in which they are created, is determined by the reason for which they are created, and is necessary to their very existence, to their ability to accomplish their purpose, to their meaning for the activity in which they participate, and to their capacity of being evidence."
- Uniqueness: "which derives to each archival document by the fact of its having a unique place in the structure of the group to which it belongs and in the documentary universe." (DURANTI, 1994, p. 334-335).

These properties, as here considered, do not concern the use of archival documents, but rather their nature. For the archivist and the archive user, such properties are not – or should not be – a promise to reach the truth; they are presented as elements differing from those documents.

The problem, in this case, would not be in acknowledging such properties, which give these documents an identity. It lies, nevertheless, in accepting them as able to faithfully represent the reality and lead to the truth at the moment of their use. There is a risk in mistaking archival authenticity with the controversial historiographical conception of historic veracity.

This still difficult differentiation regards the institutional authority attributed to constituting inscriptions as the effect of given practices conventionalized in solemn rites. The diploma is an expression to designate the archive document constituted by such

practices, whose evidentiary value is confused with the matter, form, and writing and its ordering rules (DURANTI, 1989, p. 12).

The matter is the physical expression where one can acknowledge the means and techniques to produce the object. The form is the barren manner in which the documental contents are presented to resolve a given administrative or juridical issue (NUÑEZ-CONTRERAS, 1981). The authentic document is one which “presents all the elements which are designed to provide it with authenticity.” The genuine document means “when it is truly what it purports to be.” (DURANTI, 1989, p. 17).

Despite the distinction between matter and form, the expression “documental form” commonly covers the relation of the documental contents with the matter for which one reaches diplomatic authenticity. The documental form and the writing standards determine its legal and historical diplomatic authenticity distinction. Considering such differentiations, documents can be:

- Diplomatically authentic: “are those which were written according to the practice of the time and place indicated in the text, and signed with the name(s) of the person(s) competent to create them.”
- Legally authentic: “are those which bear witness on their own because of the intervention, during or after their creation, of a representative of a public authority guaranteeing their genuineness.”
- Historically authentic: “are those which attest to events that actually took place or to information that is true.” (DURANTI, 1989, p. 17).

Diplomas, as administrative acts, can bring about juridical effects or serve as source for history. Such effects are based on evidentiary properties to prove the origin and organicity originated from groups created or maintained by institutions. The documental type is an expression referring to the diplomatic document considered in the context of the organic group by means of which it keeps its formal and original relation (BELLOTTO, 2002).

The field of studies dedicated to the form and authenticity of the diploma is Diplomatics. The one coming from Diplomatics – which in the 20th century complemented the interests of archival science for the study of the documental type – is the documental typology, archival Diplomatics or contemporary Diplomatics (DURANTI, 1989; BELLOTTO, 2002).

The diplomatic principle as a systematized piece of knowledge is attributed to the Benedictine monk Jean Mabillon, whose studies in canon law produced *De re diplomatica*, published in 1681. Mabillon outlined their tests and procedures to submit documents to the veracity proof facing demonstration and justification for authenticity. *De re diplomatica*

described the “elements of supposedly sincere acts” as it “founded a methodology for investigation and analysis installing criticism rules to tell apart false acts”¹⁰

The development of this discipline took place with the use and perfecting of techniques in the 18th and 19th centuries, when works such as *Nouveau Traité de Diplomatique* (René Prosper Tassin and Charles Toustain, between 1750 and 1765), *Die Urkunden der Karolinger* (Theodor von Sickel, 1867), and *Beiträgen zur Urkundenlehre* (Julius Ficker, 1878) were published.

The prestige of documental criticism in France reached its peak in 1821 with the creation of the *École des Chartes*, a fundamental space for the education of future archivists, historians, and scholars. Diplomatic knowledge then tooled by archival science resulted, in the 20th century, in specific knowledge for the study of the documental type.

The archive as a space for the study of information as proof allows the investigation of the authenticity of the document itself, by means of Diplomatics, or the documental type in its relation with the archival group, facing contemporary Diplomatics.

The relation between documental authenticity and truth has gone through representation modes outlined since the 20th century diplomatic procedures, coming to representations with scientific intents in the 19th century, notably in juridical, historiographical and archival knowledge.

Largely influenced by the 19th century positivistic ideary, “diplomatic truth”, concerning strictly the authenticity obtained from the documental criticism of internal and external elements of the document within the archive, was then understood as a synonym to access to historical truth, something questioned in the basis of historiography itself.

4 HISTORIOGRAPHY AND REPRESENTATION

History reached the academic summit in Europe in the 19th century. In his *Apologie pour l'histoire ou Métier d'historien*, posthumously published in 1949, Marc Bloch asserts this discipline was then constituted considering the analysis or the testimonial archived by means of historical and critical observation, based on the archetype of sciences of that nature (BLOCH, 1952).

That was one of the reasons according to which that discipline was known as “scientific”, “methodic”, “positivistic” and “rankean” – the latter adjective referring to

¹⁰ «les caractères des actes présumés sincères [...] fondait une méthode d'investigation et d'analyse et posait des règles de critique pour le discernement des actes faux.» (TESSIER, 1966, p. 11).

historian Leopold von Ranke. In addition, the expression “historicism” is associated with “hermeneutic” historians Wilhelm Dilthey and Raymond Aron (REIS, 2004).

That historiography is not dissociated from the conceptions of document as historical testimony and grounds for historical fact. Such conceptions correspond to sources written within the archives. They are characterized for being the product of choice and process of documental criticism methodically dealt by the historian as historical proof (LE GOFF, 2013).

Diplomatics helped the positivistic historiography from the 19th and early 20th centuries with a sort of knowledge allowing “the traditional document criticism” in search for authenticity. “It pursues the false [documents] and, thus, attributes a fundamental importance to dating.” (LE GOFF, 2013, p. 492). The study of the diploma was incorporated to the, then, “methods of collective memory and history toward the wish to prove scientifically.” (LE GOFF, 2013, p. 488).

In this perspective, it should be up to the historian to “indicate, as briefly as possible, the provenance, i.e. the means to retrieve, which means precisely to submit to a universal probation rule.”¹¹ Bloch tended to hesitate “facing writings protected by impressive legal guarantees, acts of power or private contracts, as long as they have been solemnly validated.”¹²

In addition to Diplomatics, methodic historiography benefits from other fields of knowledge, such as biblical exegesis (Daniel Van Papebroeck), the Cartesian method (René Descartes) (RICŒUR, 2000) and paleography (RIESCO TERRERO, 2000).

In the 20th century, methodic historiography was questioned. The strongest criticisms came from the *Annales* school (BURKE, 1997) or movement (REIS, 2004). It started from Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch meeting and exchanging ideas and projects in Strasbourg, France. The theoretical success of the project is attributed to its publication in the *Annales d'Histoire Économique et Sociale* journal, on January 15th 1929, which was noteworthy in the very name of the movement.

Among the aspects the *Annales* movement criticized, the narrative form stands out, praising great political feats, grand celebrities and happenings of the State. In addition to the happenings, the *Annales* presented an interest in the analysis of social structures and

¹¹ “indiquer le plus brièvement possible la provenance, c’est-à-dire le moyen de le retrouver, équivaut sans plus à se soumettre à une règle universelle de probité.” (BLOCH, 1952, p. 53).

¹² “les écrits qui se présentent à l’abri de garanties juridiques impressionnantes : actes du pouvoir ou contrats privés, pour peu que ces derniers aient été solennellement validés.” (BLOCH, 1952, p. 55).

historical series in everyday life (POMIAN, 1978). Hence, it applied cultural relativity to dialogue and approximate to social sciences.

The exclusivity in the use of archival sources to write history was also questioned. Despite not denying such resorts, the *Annales* questioned the dogmatism according to which “absolutely nothing in history is even thinkable apart from texts.”¹³ Such dogmatism further assumes “going from traces of the facts to the facts themselves” intending to “reach the closest image possible of what direct observation of the past fact could have yielded.”¹⁴

The *Annales* helped clarify that “authentic diplomatic pieces may also contain historical falsehoods.”¹⁵ That movement stimulated “new types of questions on the past, in order to choose new research objects.” Hence, other source types were sought to “supplement official documents.” (BURKE, 1997, p. 25).

Whether natural or artificial, any object that may be questioned about the past was thereafter regarded as a source. Material culture entered the historiographical interest specter. Paul Ricœur interprets the notion of traces as a possible synthesis as it includes willing or unwilling testimonies, as well as the idea of index (RICŒUR, 2000, p. 221-222).

The shift from oral testimony, natural memory, to register modes and material index, artificial memory, which one may archive, as opposed to other documents, in Ricœur’s point of view, reveals the schematic value of the notion of trace to come to documental proof. In that case, an object which can prove something needs the historian to use procedures for the analysis of traces preserved within an institution.

The document stored in an institution will be subjected to conditionings and forms of power operationalized by rules and norms, which can be expressed, for instance, facing the right to access, consulting deadlines, the category of the document, among other things. In fact, Ricœur highlighted Foucault’s knowledge/power relation as he analyzed the process of proving (action) and what was proven (object) (RICŒUR, 2000, p. 224-227).

The proof of a document or of a group of documents assumes the articulation of the documental phase to explaining, comprehensive and literary phases of representation. There is a procedural difference regarding the cause/effect of the positivistic analysis associating authenticity to validity of proof. In Ricœur’s perspective, there are questionings on willing or unwilling material testimonies.

¹³ “além dos textos, não existe absolutamente história pensável.” (CHARTIER, 1978, p. 517).

¹⁴ “ir do vestígio dos fatos aos próprios fatos [...] atingir numa imagem a mais próxima possível daquela que teria dado a observação direta do fato passado.” (CHARTIER, 1978, p. 517).

¹⁵ “peças diplomáticas autênticas podem conter também falsidades históricas.” (BAUER, 1957, p. 369).

The proven object is comprised as “one or more facts, which can be asserted in singular propositions, discrete, increasingly often comprehending the mention of dates, places, names, and action or stative verbs.”¹⁶ The manner of treatment of singular propositions also deserves to be differed from the positivistic one.

Positivists consider the fact synonymous to the happening, and the historical fact synonymous to the empirical fact, as shaped by natural sciences. The fact should be thought as a product of representation of the happening, in an exercise gathering construction, documental procedure, and document. Therefore, while the fact is the said thing, the happening is the thing or the intention of which one speaks (RICŒUR, 2000, p. 227-228).

In addition to intentions of the representation of social reality (emphasis in the proof value of the authentic object), the idea of fact as a product of representation of the happening brings to light pragmatic and symbolic aspects comprised and comprising in discourses *about* reality. The contribution of simultaneity of document and monument synthesizes such an epistemological leap which, as a result, brings about political consequences (RABELLO, 2018).

This assumption goes back to the conception of document brought about in Michel Foucault's *L'Archéologie du savoir*, originally published in 1969 and further developed in Le Goff's *Document/monument*. It mentions, albeit indirectly, the contributions of the *Annales*, which made way for investigating injunctions and various interests, such as political and economic ones, expressed in documents. In Foucault's view, contemporary history “turns documents into monuments.” (FOUCAULT, 1969, p. 15).

The document/monument acquires its value when compared to other means to allow possible understandings of traces man left behind, unfolding “a mass of elements one isolates, gathers, render pertinent on related, comprising groups.” (FOUCAULT, 1969, p. 15).

The document/monument presents an understanding differing from the positivistic one which turned monuments into documents, causing them to speak from the historian's emotional voice (MENESES, 1998). The recurrent perspectivism of such an inversion directs efforts toward “the intrinsic description of the monument.”¹⁷ The contribution from

¹⁶ “un fait, des faits, susceptibles d'être assertés dans des propositions singulières, discrètes, comprenant de plus souvent mention de dates, de lieux, de noms propres, de verbes d'action ou d'état.” (RICŒUR, 2000, p. 189).

¹⁷ “à la description intrinsèque du monument.” (FOUCAULT, 1969, p. 34).

material culture studies broadens its meaning as it brings life, work and language domains to reflection.

The assumption “every document is a monument” makes way to think the document from the comprehension of how one should not approach it. “The positivistic illusion (produced by a society whose dominants had in it in their interest to be so) [...] saw in the document a proof of good faith, as long as it was authentic.” The limitation of positivism leads to the following teaching: “[...] there is no objective, harmless, primary document.” (LE GOFF, 2013, p. 494).

The document as material expression of culture and society “is not something in charge of the past; it is a product of the society that made it according to relations of powers holding power therein.” (LE GOFF, 2013, p. 495). Permanence and exercise of power makes of the document/monument the result “of historical societies’ effort to impose in the future – willingly or unwillingly – a given image of themselves.” Given this limitation, “there is no truth-document.” “It is up to the historian not to be naïve.” (LE GOFF, 2013, p. 497).

The conceptual openness of the document the *Annales* movement proposed – even after reaching historiographical establishment under the name of *nouvelle histoire* – displaces the emphasis on authenticity to the archival document as it begins to conceive it equally as a document/monument. Such a displacement can also be considered in the context of archival practices, as it brings about manners of knowledge leading to political consequences in them, as well as in the historiographical context.

5 ARCHIVE AND ARCHIVAL PRACTICES

Terry Cook and Joan Schwartz’s study “Archives, records, and power: the making of modern memory” demonstrates the controversial reality and representation relation, so far observed in the historiographical field, is also found in this field and in archival practices.

The problem according to which the archive is, at times, conceived as a neutral repository of facts becomes evident there. In accordance with the positivistic ideary found throughout the 19th century scientism, the archive is still placed within an institution holding myths of impartiality, neutrality, and objectivity in the 21st century.

As an alternative, Schwartz and Cook's text warns that archival practices, such as assessment, selection, description, preservation, and communication standards, can help the reinvention of the archive. Facing such a resort, one can investigate archives as "active sites where social power is negotiated, contested, confirmed." (SCHWARTZ; COOK, 2002, p. 29). In such dynamics, the changeability of the archive represents power over the identity and the means by which society seeks evidence of values.

The archive is noteworthy for its relevance for public and private life institutions. It is also a space of power for historiographical representation modes, collective memory, and the construction of identities. The archivist exerts power facing his/her assignments, among them, managing documents used as source for social reality representation (SCHWARTZ; COOK, 2002, p. 1-3).

Like all institutions, the archive is a social construct. "Their origins lie in the information needs and social values of the rulers, governments, businesses, associations, and individuals who establish and maintain them." (SCHWARTZ; COOK, 2002, p. 3). As it makes part of an intellectual and critical context, the archive is an object of dispute for the construction of meaning about the past.

Postmodern theoreticians criticize the knowledge/power relation concerning historiographical representations, as well as representations of memory and of the construction of identities. In such questioning, the "archival practice and societal needs, and clearer appreciation of the power relations inherent in the theories and practices of archives, as well as in the nature of records and record keeping." (SCHWARTZ; COOK, 2002, p. 12-13).

One can observe knowledge modes with political effects in the shift from "natural memory" (oral testimony) to "artificial memory" (archived). Knowledge is objectified by subjects exerting power as information producers (persons or institutions) and/or as intermediating professions (in this case, the archivist) or as a user (for instance: the historian).

The archive is presented as a context according to which one can observe social claims implicating means and modes of comprehension about reality concerning culturally shared knowledge. The archive is constituted as a narrative (consolidated by archivists) and it allows the construction of narratives (by its users).

The subjects' objectifications and the contexts regarded as "natural" lighten the weight of meaning underlying in the archive as a builder and a construction element in

discourses. Naturalness of the archive and of the document has consequences as they disregard the reckoning or unaware actions underlying in the power involved.

The relation between archive and society is characterized not only by its contributions to social or collective memory, but by actions centered in power. Such actions can be expressed in the very document or in practices such as classification and ordering of documents, as well as implications on individual freedoms and rights (for example, the right to access information) (SCHWARTZ; COOK, 2002, p. 15).

In fact, archives “must be subjected to a process of ‘on-going critical interpretation’ among creators, keepers, and users.” (SCHWARTZ; COOK, 2002, p. 23). Continuous interpretation is due to the fact that archivists and other professionals at times cover power relations facing practices guided by impartiality, neutrality, and objectivity myths. They can “document primarily mainstream culture and powerful records creators.” (SCHWARTZ; COOK, 2002, p. 18).

Whether willingly or unwillingly, professional practices and knowledge occurring in the archive and in the document/monument bring about political consequences. In other words, they guide power toward defining representation modes according to pragmatic and symbolic aspects, and political and economic injunctions comprised and comprising in discourses *about* reality.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The archetype of natural sciences has been a way to ground, even in human and social sciences, the defense of impartiality of producing, intermediating, or interpreting subjects amidst the proof. The modes of objectifying “information as proof” establish a direct relation between these subjects’ authenticity and representation of reality. This representation mode makes use of the following:

- “The document, when authentic, leads to the truth” - it brings along intent of faithful representation *of* social reality. It finds a parallel with the objective or physical aspect of information and grounds “information as proof.” Such an uttering, central to Diplomatics, still guides pieces of knowledge such as juridical, historiographical, and archival ones, grounded by positivists principles. It holds an intent of maintaining the original or objective stage of the message, given the (materialized) “evidence”, turning it into a(n) (institutionalized) “thing”, and conceived as “proof” (for representation).

The document/authentic makes part, to some extent, of the grounds of history seen from above, from the winners' point of view, whose narrative praises great political deeds, grand celebrities, and happenings of the State. Information as proof, in the case, brings the intent of reflecting social reality. Sharing such an intent, part of the political implications derive from practices such as selecting or using information, whose censorship, should it occur, may be cloaked in technical neutrality.

In this sense, representation tools for retrieving information (classification systems, repertoires, inventories, dossiers, thesauruses) can silence minorities or groups seeking social rights such as women, people of African heritage, homosexuals, natives of the American continent, among others. The biased representation and the absence of topics or remissions in systems can exclude such groups, shunning out personal or collective memories.

Criticisms to this representation mode, in fields such as historiography and archival science, preach that science may end up not prioritizing epistemologies whose possible narratives legitimize, before anything else, historical power asymmetries. The following fragment considers institutional and disciplinary implications criticizing social reality representation modes (RABELLO; RODRIGUES, 2014; 2016).

The document as a means to legitimize discourses stems from acknowledging academic knowledge validates object as proof as an expression of power exertion. From the knowledge/power relation, information monumentality is embodied in the document as a fragment for possible interpretations about reality. This representation mode finds grounds in the following:

- "Every document is a monument" - this bears the assumption modes of legitimizing discourses *about* reality. They are referred to in the social or pragmatic aspect of information and grounds "information as monument." Such an uttering guides critical knowledge towards positivism. Knowledge and power in the selection are brought to light (identification, choice, and validating material evidence) as it is inserted in the system and technically treated (transformation of evidence into "thing") and in the knowledge with scientific, technical, or another authority judging and validating something to be proven.

The document/monument, to some extent, makes part of the grounds for history seen from below, from the silenced ones, whose narrative considers, among other aspects, everyday life, outcasts, mentalities, long duration, and the "total history." Information as monument comprises the discourse legitimizing and legitimized by informational practices. From such a perspective, representational tools to retrieve

information can give a voice to minorities or groups seeking social rights, as well as allow access to personal or collective memory.

When the document/authentic is conceived as document/monument – i.e., as a possible discourse, considering rules and norms according to variables such as culture or political and economic conjuncture – it complements its proving force in search for truth on behalf of the defeated or silenced, facing documental proof holding, for example, perpetrators of violence of all sorts accountable for their actions, or assuring rights to citizens.

The document/monument, as well as an expression of knowledge power, can, conversely, disqualify the document/authentic. The loss of proving force can be observed from aforementioned variables. It is worth mentioning the case of unsuccessful attempts to prove human right violations in certain theocratic states, whose juridical regime does not foresee certain rights, for instance, for women and homosexuals, or in whose official historiography such topics or not an issue.

Representation modes guided by both utterings (document/authentic or document/monument), albeit competing and, sometimes, overlapping, show knowledge with political implications, even if the theoretical and methodological causes for the possible political effects are not always considered. Such demonstration may, at times, occur due to unawareness of any academic or professional practice guided by well-defined epistemological assumptions (DICK, 1999).

The relevance of studies seeking theoretical and methodological grounds rise from this assumption, in the sense of clarifying the limits and potential for procedures and practices when guided by utterings from differing epistemologies. Furthermore, the transversal feature of concepts, as in the case of document and information, are a study object for different knowledge fields, reveals the importance of theoretical and interdisciplinary investigations.

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