

# The clash between domestic and Western traditions: Japanese understanding of the archival principles

Yo Hashimoto

Kyoto University Archives, Kyoto, Japan

## ABSTRACT

Japanese archivists believe that they have incorporated the theory and practice of the West and that one of the most successful results is the method of Phased Archival Processing (PAP), invented for arrangement and description. The first phase of PAP records the existing order or chaos of archival materials. However, it is believed to be indispensable only in Japan. This article argues that this phenomenon occurs because the Japanese understanding of the principles of respect for provenance and the original order is different from that in the West. It traces the history of the development of Japanese archival science and sets it in the Western context.

## KEYWORDS

Japan; provenance; original order; arrangement; description

## Introduction

Japanese archivists, when processing archives, have to make sketches of the physical arrangement of archival materials. They draw sketches of the place where the materials were found (see [Figure 1](#)), make lists describing the summary and location of the boxes, documents, and other materials, and allot temporal serial numbers to these items. There was a case where an archivist sketched a bathroom containing books and personal papers.

Individual documents, which are tied together with a string and as a unit to prevent scattering, and boxes that contain the archival materials are transferred to a place with enough space for processing. The order or partial order of the contents of the boxes and the bound documents are sketched while allotting temporal serial sub-numbers to them (see [Figure 2](#)).

The archivists have to draw each layer when the content in the boxes consist of multiple layers of paper. After finishing the sketch, they make temporal lists according to temporal numbers, which reflect the physical arrangement of materials as they were originally found. These sketching and preliminary listing steps, which are part of what is called the Present Situation Recording (PSR), are indispensable activities for archival arrangement and description, even though sketching is gradually being replaced by taking digital pictures of the items.

University professors and archival professionals repeatedly inculcated the concept of PSR in my mind when I was doing a graduate archival course. However, when I read several fundamental books on archival arrangement and description written in English,

**X Collection PSR Sketch** (Form 1)

No. \_\_\_\_\_

Place	Chest of drawer 3 on the North wall side	Number	3	Taking Pictures	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Done 2020/11/26
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Date ( 2020 / 11 / 26 ) By ( Yo hashimoto ) Temporal No. ( 25 )

Figure 1. Example of a sketch, illustrating a chest of drawers containing historical documents.

**X Collection PSR Sketch** (Form 1)

No. \_\_\_\_\_

Place	Drawer 1 of the chest 3	Number	3-1	Taking Pictures	<input type="checkbox"/> Done 20 / /
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Date ( 20 / / ) By ( ) Temporal No. ( )

Figure 2. Example of a sketch, illustrating historical documents within a drawer.

French, German, and Italian, I did not find any concept equivalent to PSR. Only Japanese archival science regards PSR as indispensable and useful.

The purpose of this article is to clarify the background of PSR and to show how it reflects Japanese theoretical understanding of archival science. The article is divided into four sections. The first defines Phased Archival Processing (PAP), which consists of four processing phases beginning with PSR. It is said to be an effective method of archival arrangement and description in Japan and to incorporate the fundamental theory and methodology developed in the West, including *respect des fonds*, or the respect of provenance and original order, mostly from English-language archival literature. The next section briefly traces the history of Japanese archival science development leading to the creation of PAP. The third section attempts to set the Japanese interpretation of archival theory in the Western context, as summarised by Jennifer Douglas,<sup>1</sup> to detect its distinctive characteristics. The final section concludes by suggesting an update of Japanese archival science to deal with contemporary issues, such as digital records.

Before starting our discussion, it is necessary to explain the nuances of the word, 'West' in this article. It is a translation of the Japanese term, *ōbei* (欧米), which refers to Europe and North America and is frequently used in Japanese archival science literature as well as in other academic disciplines when discussing the contrast between these areas and Japan. The usage of the term has the negative effect of neglecting the variety that exists in the *ōbei* area. However, this article employs 'the West' in this sense because it attempts to illustrate the characteristics of archival science that have evolved in the Japanese context by comparing Japan with other regions.

### **Phased Archival Processing<sup>2</sup>**

Masahito Andō, a leader of archival science in Japan, created PAP 'to reorganise the systematic order of records reflecting the administrative organisations and functions of their creator, and to describe the order using finding aids such as inventory.'<sup>3</sup> PAP consists of four sequential phases to process archives and manuscripts, each of which has two sides: arrangement and description. As mentioned above, the first phase is PSR. A brief survey is conducted in the arrangement step by making a sketch of the physical situation of the whole collection, while allotting temporal serial numbers to the units of paper and other items. This is followed by a description step, making preliminary lists that note titles, dates, and temporal numbers. PAP emphasises the importance of this phase because it fixes the order or chaos present when the archivist finds the collection and provides precious clues for restoring the original order. The arrangement work of the second phase is a content review, in which the archivists examine all the items in the collection they are processing. In the next description step, they make detailed content lists at the item level, as prescribed by the International Council on Archives (ICA).<sup>4</sup> The content lists include the producer, addressee, summary, date, form, and other relevant information from each record. The third phase refers to the restoration of a systematic order that may exist in the archival collection. In the arrangement part of this phase, the archivists analyse the state of the collection and the functions of the creator to detect the original order. However, PAP firmly prohibits changing the physical arrangement and only permits them to alter the intellectual order, using the content list produced in the second phase. This intellectual arrangement is usually performed by swapping rows in the content list written, in many cases, in an Excel spreadsheet. The reason for this is

that Japanese archivists assert that some parts of the original order, which may be difficult to discern, might remain in the present arrangement. This examination process, or structural analysis, results in the creation of a basic inventory that is on the description side of the third phase. It contains the description of the creator and its functions, and the content list with the swapped rows also forms part of the basic inventory. After the swapping, the temporal serial numbers are still used as formal reference codes in the inventory and line up in disorder in its content list (e.g., 2-3-1, 3-5-3, 5-6-1). The final phase mainly deals with the description side and addresses the creation of a variety of finding aids, such as indexes of people, places, or subjects, or calendars for coping with a variety of user requests. It is necessary to follow the phases in sequence and not reverse the order.

One of the unique characteristics of PAP lies in its fieldwork style of archival processing by which a research team investigates the location of the owner of an archival collection, including its creator or other possessors. Finishing the first phase or PSR in the fieldwork process is vital because its main aim is to record the state and arrangement in the context of the owner. Some archival collections processed by the PAP method remain in the hands of their owners, in which case fieldwork continues at the end of the content review. When gathering information about a collection without fieldwork, some processing archivists draw sketches and make preliminary lists of items in boxes acquired by the archives.

PAP is famous in Japan because of its adoption of the most fundamental principles of archival science as influenced by the West: the respect of provenance and original order. It respects these concepts in that it asserts that archivists must only intellectually and not physically rearrange records within a collection created by an organisation, person, or family. In addition, it adopts other principles developed from domestic traditional studies: the preservation of original form and equal treatment,<sup>5</sup> which will be discussed below.

The elements that PAP concretely incorporated from the West are clearly presented. Japanese archivists mainly gain knowledge and information on archival science from English literature. Andō, the inventor of PAP, explained its essence on the basis of the argument of Michael Cook in his book *Archives Administration*.<sup>6</sup> The part on the right of [Figure 3](#) labelled 'Description' displays a diagram based on Cook's writing,<sup>7</sup> whereas the corresponding phases based on Andō's writing are presented on the left part of the figure, which is labelled 'Arrangement'. However, the processing style of PAP is not identical to the archival arrangement and description illustrated in Western writing today. While the processing styles of PAP and those of the West are similar in the primary way of processing, Western writers assert that archivists can physically rearrange files and items, and that the description phase begins after the arrangement is finished,<sup>8</sup> without mentioning the sketching phase and other PSR processes. Cook adopts that view despite the insistence that PAP's processing method is derived from his book. The diagram depicted in *Archives Administration*, which serves as the basis of the right column of [Figure 3](#), illustrates a scheme of finding aids created in the phase of archival description, the degree of detail of which should be decided according to policies, resources, priorities, and other elements of archives.<sup>9</sup> Other manuals for archivists at the time when *Archives Administration* was published in 1977 also demonstrated a similar way of arrangement and description.<sup>10</sup>

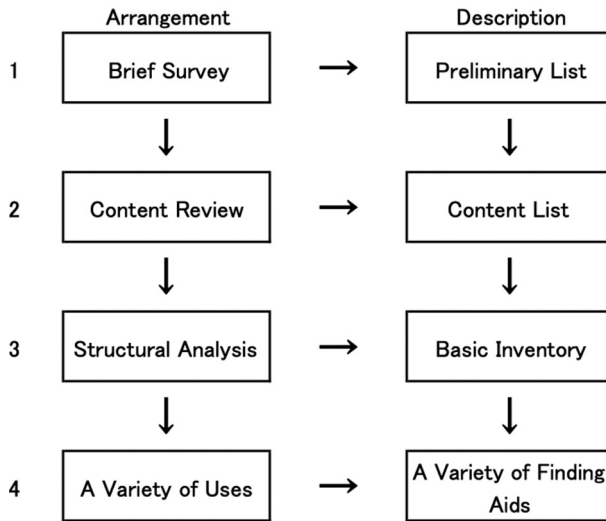


Figure 3. Diagram of PAP.

In addition to the different practices approved by PAP and those approved by Western guides, there are also different interpretations of the principle of original order. By the time of publication of Cook's book, archivists in the West agreed with the central part of the principles of provenance and original order, as presented by M. Antal Szedo and Johannes Papritz at the ICA conference held in 1964. Their speeches were based on the conference participants' answers to questionnaires regarding respect for provenance and original order, arrangement, and description.<sup>11</sup> Szedo and Papritz concluded that the ICA participants agreed with the definition of respect of provenance as the prohibition of merging of collections created by two or more creators, while they admitted that archivists whose collections displayed no order and included no clue to restoring the order, such as registry or classification numbers, were disobeying the principle of original order. In terms of respect of provenance, their perspective was similar to that of PAP, but their interpretation of the respect of original order was contrary to that of PAP's viewpoint. While the proponents of PAP adopt the Western definition of the original order, they interpret the respect of the principle of original order as adaptable to collection in disorder, without any registry or classification numbers. They believe that PSR can record a trace of the original order that might remain in the disarrayed collection and provide a hint about order restoration.<sup>12</sup> Exploring the contexts that give rise to the difference in understanding of original order, as well as respect of provenance, requires retracing the history of development of archival science in Japan.

### The history of the development of archival science in Japan

Hideyuki Aoyama and Minoru Takahashi summarised the history of archival science in Japan, which dates from the latter part of the nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup> The Iwakura Embassy, which made a diplomatic journey to the United States and Europe from 1871 to 1873, saw archives in Venice and introduced their findings to Japan. Since the former

Empire of Japan strived to absorb the most advanced knowledge from Europe at that time, it collected and translated its literature and invited and hired foreign government advisers. The translated literature includes a handbook for records managers and archivists written in German. Based on this, Paul Mayet, a German hired by the Japanese government, pointed out several decisive differences in records management and archival administration between Germany and Japan.<sup>14</sup> This confirms that the Japanese government acquired information on the records management and archival administration of the European nations, but whether this actually had an impact on the laws and regulations of Japan remains unresolved.

Historians with a speciality in diplomatics contributed to archival research in Japan, as is the case in Europe.<sup>15</sup> Hiroyuki Miura, who visited archives in Europe in 1922 and 1923, introduced the principle of *respect des fonds* as an adequate methodology to organise historical records. He understood this as being equal to the respect of provenance. He also advocated the preservation of the original form of individual documents, rolls, and account books to conserve them properly.<sup>16</sup> At that time, the original form only meant the external elements, as defined in diplomatics. However, some specialists in diplomatics extended the preservation of the original form to the arrangement of each item that composes the structure of a collection and asserted that one should maintain the collection as a unit, the elements of which are impossible to divide.<sup>17</sup>

After World War II, the Japanese government conducted the Survey Program of the Early Modern Historical Documents of Ordinary People from 1948 to 1953. It adopted a subject classification scheme through which historical documents could be sorted according to their content. The program had a substantial effect on the historical records of lords and merchants as well as laypeople. In the 1950s, John Hall proposed a method to classify an archival collection of the family of a feudal lord in which he distinguished public records from private papers before arranging them in categories according to the administration and functions of the family.<sup>18</sup> In the same period, some historians espoused the method of classifying public records and private papers by subject matter, and other researchers who surveyed early modern villages' collections suggested that it was necessary to keep each village collection as a single unit and divide documents within it into thematic categories. In other words, the historical documents of survey projects at that time abided by the principle of respect for provenance. However, the Japanese Local History Research Association criticised subject classification within an archival collection of a creator as a practice that defied the original forms of its composition.<sup>19</sup> This usage of the original form might be similar to the original order. We can find the key concepts of archival science in the 1950s from the movement of historical documents research in Japan: provenance, original order, and function.

In the 1960s and the 1970s, more historians who were engaged with organising archival materials began to use the original form with an expanded meaning, including an internal structure of archival collection, and to demand maintenance of that structure. Moreover, the Archives Section of the National Institute of Japanese Literature proposed the employment of an intellectual classification system using index cards to stop physically changing the original form.<sup>20</sup> A further sign of progress in this period was the restoration of the original form, wherein scattered items were brought back to their original positions in an archival collection by analysing their backgrounds and the reasons to produce them.<sup>21</sup> The most successful case was that of Toji Hyakugo Monjo,

a massive collection composed of medieval documents preserved at the Toji temple in Kyoto. It includes approximately 25,000 items from the eighth to the eighteenth centuries.<sup>22</sup> The historical researchers responsible for processing the collection advocated the maintenance of the original form in terms of material preservation and the existing order of documents. They conducted attentive research into the history of the collection, including the way it had been managed by analysis of its texts based on their knowledge of Japanese diplomatics. This processing is an ideal instance of arrangement and description as practised in Japanese archival science. The same method was also applied to modern Japanese institutional records and private papers. The National Archives of Japan, established in 1971, incorporated the principles of respect for provenance and original order taken from archives in the West to organise non-current records transferred from the ministries and government agencies.<sup>23</sup> When it comes to modern private papers, Daikichi Irokawa, who intensively studied the modern history of people, emphasised the importance of sustaining the present state of archival materials in the field where historians investigated them and the original physical sequences of the documents.<sup>24</sup> The importance of examining not only the principles of processing but also the archival history was recognised in Japan before the importation of archival science from overseas began in earnest.

The movement of the incorporation of archival science from the West began in the mid-1980s. The proponents of this movement focused on archival arrangement and description at first and explained the theory and methodology by using scientific literature written in English. In the process of examination of the core concepts, they compared the original order to the original form. Andō, who played a leading role in this innovation, explained the principle of original order in practice as the prohibition of changing the present form of the disposition of documents as they were initially found by archivists and concluded that respect for the original order and the original form are almost identical.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, another significant concept added to archival processing in Japan was the hierarchy of descriptions from general to specific. The PAP that employs the PSR as a necessary process was invented in this vein. Those who were familiar with archives in Japan commented that PAP was a successful result of the importation of the essence of Western archival science to archival research developed in Japan. Andō acknowledged the substantial impact of the processing method of Toji Hyakugo Monjo and the proposal that Irokawa raised for modern private papers on PAP's development.<sup>26</sup>

Early on, the PAP target was a collection of historical manuscripts created in the early modern age and mostly held by the descendants of its creator. Many Japanese historians organised research groups consisting of university professors, their students, and local researchers to conduct a fieldwork style survey of the historical collection. In the 1980s, some asserted that fieldwork must involve PSR activity, which is the first phase of PAP. One of the research groups that considered PSR as necessary started shooting a video to record the present order or disorder of documents and the processing steps, such as how members of the group took the documents one by one from a container.<sup>27</sup> Today, PAP applies to modern and contemporary manuscript collections.

However, some opponents of the practices of PAP contended that the PSR is time-consuming, labour-intensive, too complex, invites confusion among inexperienced participants in fieldwork, and causes difficulties when the owner of the historical manuscripts has to accept the PAP fieldwork group.<sup>28</sup> There were also calls to omit

PAP if the resources for performing it were insufficient.<sup>29</sup> The proponents of PAP, however, argued that the cost-performance issue could be solved by using the preliminary list produced in the conduct of PAP as a kind of finding aid. As for the lack of sufficient resources, they refused to make compromises because they feared that compromising on this might result in no remaining records documenting and sketching the situation surrounding historical papers at the time that the fieldwork survey was carried out.<sup>30</sup>

In the 1990s, the development of ISAD(G) had a significant impact on the theory and practice of archival arrangement and description in Japan. PAP proponents promoted the application of ISAD(G) to the processing of domestic archives by translating and introducing it to Japanese archivists. These activities led to a discussion on whether the description rules and elements of ISAD(G) were applicable to a Japanese convention of archival description, which assumes that archivists should make a detailed list at the item level. In particular, a multi-level description that reflects archival arrangement caused confusion among processing archivists who were unfamiliar with the hierarchical understanding of archives. The Model of the Levels of Arrangement of fonds illustrated in ISAD(G) – nothing more than the appendix – was so impressive that archivists of Japan continue to recognise this description standard as applicable to the arrangement standard even today. The most perplexing part of the concept of hierarchy was the series level since it is an uncommon concept in the history of records management in Japan, and few archivists see it in reality. In fact, manuscript collections including historical documents and private papers that PAP has primarily focused on were disordered in most cases, and the legislation and regulations on public records of Japan identify files and folders, not series, as essential units. Therefore, Japanese archivists must build series by perusing the contents of each item and examining the fonds creator if they are compliant with the hierarchy model of ISAD(G). Those who practice PAP have created an intellectual series using the content list produced in its second phase to abide by the rigid rule of PAP that prohibits physical changes in the documents and files. Consequently, the phrase ‘list arrangement’ was coined and became a common expression for archival arrangement in Japanese archival science.<sup>31</sup>

To this day, a distinctive Japanese orientation has continued to evolve. Archival scholars in Japan identify the series level of aggregation of records as a function<sup>32</sup> despite the definition of series in ISAD(G) as:

Documents arranged in accordance with a filing system or maintained as a unit because they result from the same accumulation or filing process, or the same activity, have a particular form, or because of some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt, or use.<sup>33</sup>

An activity that is a component of a function is one aspect of a series. The reason Japanese archivists focus on function is that they believe that arranging records based on function restores the original order. However, one cannot deny the possibility that creators classify their records according to their form or subject. Because Japanese archivists regret that they might have damaged the integrity of an archival collection by classifying it by subject and form in the past, they persist in building up intellectual series based only on function. This series building requires elaborate and complex steps, from establishing functions to allotting records to them. As a result, case studies of the archival arrangement have



become a focus of research for historians and archivists, which has led to the publication of a large body of academic literature.

To form an intellectual series, Japanese archivists have included in their studies not only the function but also the history of the records management of the collection creator. In the 1980s, the life cycle model of records management dictated the method of structural analysis as a part of archival processing. The examination of the archival history of records was performed using technical terms of the model including active, semi-active, and inactive, regardless of their creation date. Meanwhile, some archivists studied and introduced the Australian records continuum model, but this innovative perspective with postmodern thought has never had a substantial effect on the values of archival principles in Japan.

When it comes to higher levels than series, a fonds is defined as the entire body of the records of the same provenance, and Japanese archivists have recently identified it as the organisation creating it.<sup>34</sup> When the fonds is understood in this way, it can be applied to medieval or early modern records created by a unique organisation. However, as Peter Scott argued,<sup>35</sup> it is difficult to recognise the fonds in the case of modern records that are influenced by frequent organisational changes. Some Japanese archivists have studied the Australian series system to try to cope with such records,<sup>36</sup> but no finding aid conforming to this system has been completed, either on paper or online.

A few archivists have placed emphasis on the other aims included in ISAD(G), which comprise the exchange and sharing of data and 'the integration of descriptions from different locations into a unified information system.'<sup>37</sup> Many archives have developed online archival catalogues of their own, but a consortium of finding aids shared among multiple institutions through ISAD(G) with the Encoded Archival Description (EAD) has seldom been implemented. Almost all the leading scholars of Japanese archival science are researchers of Japanese history. The information and communications technology (ICT) segment of Japanese archival science has seen insufficient growth perhaps because of this. The paucity of ICT knowledge may hinder the fulfilment of online archives catalogues linking the content description with the context description through the Australian series system or a combination of ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF).

Another distinctive characteristic of Japanese archival science is the principle of equal treatment, which provides that all historical documents should be treated equally. This is considered the most fundamental attitude that those engaged in the preservation and organisation of historical documents should take. According to this principle, there is no difference in the value of historical documents, whether they belong to the emperor and other politicians or to ordinary people, and they must be preserved and organised equally. It is not permissible to treat them poorly, even if they are fragments of documents.<sup>38</sup> This tenet leads to an attitude that does not permit any appraisal work on manuscript collections to which PAP is applicable. For example, publications such as books and newspapers within private papers are preserved in the same way as archival records. One research team even kept a paper case for disposable wooden chopsticks sold at a store despite having no inscription. The weeding of valueless items in the processing of archival materials done in the West is thus unacceptable in the Japanese context. Although the origin of the principle of equal treatment is unclear, it must have some relationship with the Japanese habit of describing every item and document.

It is evident from the history of archival science in Japan that some methodologies similar to the principles of respect for provenance and original order based on proper Japanese context exist. Japanese archivists who studied archival science from English sources interpreted the Japanese methodologies to be identical to the methodologies developed in the West. However, one can detect a difference between the original order and original form, with the latter regarding PSR and the maintenance of the existing order or even chaos as an indispensable condition. In the next section, therefore, we reconsider whether the Japanese interpretation of archival theory and methodology, and in particular the interpretation of the original order, are genuinely the same as those of the West.

### **Comparison with the evolution of archival science in the west**

As mentioned above, Western knowledge has impacted the progress of Japanese archival science since the 1980s. At the same time, the West's archival science has continued evolving up to now, accepting the influence of postmodern thought, digital technology, and other factors. To correctly evaluate the distance between archival science in Japan and in the West, one needs to consider the way it evolved in both contexts. The following section will attempt to clarify which stage of progress of archival science in the West corresponds to the Japanese understanding of archival science based on the analysis of the principle of provenance carried out by Jennifer Douglas.

Douglas summarises the evolution of the understanding of the principle of provenance, which she defines as comprising the following parts: the principles of *respect des fonds* and original order, and analyses that evolution in three stages.<sup>39</sup> In the first stage, from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century, archivists adapted the principle of provenance to the ancient closed fonds that never increased because their creator no longer existed. They regarded provenance as a unique concrete entity and original order as a single physical arrangement, which was restorable by investigating the fonds and the creator when the order disappeared.<sup>40</sup> In the next stage, in the mid- to late-twentieth century, the concept of provenance expanded to an abstract network linking a variety of relationships because open fonds, to which records continue to flow from living creators, became a major issue to cope with in arrangement and description. Frequent changes in creator organisations exacerbated the open fonds problem because more than two provenances could relate to a single accession of records. This complexity of recordkeeping triggered archivists to grasp fonds as intellectual entities that are only possible to express through archival description enabling linkages among several provenances and record aggregations.<sup>41</sup> New lights were also shed on the concept of stable and ideal original order so that it was realised as a fluid order that might be reorganised by creators or discovered by archivists.<sup>42</sup> At the final stage in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, postmodern thought influenced the understanding of the principle of provenance. As a result, broader views on provenance occurred, including societal provenance, parallel provenance, a community of records, and other new thoughts.<sup>43</sup> Another issue is the digital record environment, which provides a new opportunity to rethink the concept of provenance to apply it to digital records with particular attributes nonexistent in paper records.<sup>44</sup>

Compared with the stages described by Douglas, the idea of provenance and original order in Japan mostly crossed the first stage but remained in the middle of the second stage in the mid- to late-twentieth century. Japanese archivists have coped with not only 'ancient fonds', but also modern records, using archival principles and ISAD(G). However, they do not fully realise the potential of the linkage of separated descriptions through the combination of ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF) or the series system, which would enable them to process records with complex structures caused by constant changes in their creators and functions. This is because they see fonds as a concrete body of records and not an abstract concept, as developed in the second stage. The argument of the original order at this stage seemingly resembles the idea of the original form, in that it includes respect for 'the received order of the records, which would refer to the order the records are in when they are received by an archives'<sup>45</sup> because the ideal order is difficult to obtain. However, the received order may be one of several possible orders, but it is not possible to expand it to original chaos, according to the definition of original order in *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*.<sup>46</sup> For this reason, one should distinguish the original form from the received order.

There are some discussions on the interpretation of the principle of provenance at the third stage of evolution in Japan. The postmodern perspective of provenance, for example, the societal provenance, is seldom found in the Japanese literature. The most imperative problem is the application of the principle of respect for provenance and the original order to the digital environment. In the digital world, description replaces arrangement<sup>47</sup> since the metadata description for each item is necessary to clarify its provenance and form the archival bond<sup>48</sup> that constitutes the original order or internal structure of a fonds. This item-level description that should be added to digital records is much more granular than the content list of PAP; hence, the PAP style that requires human work can hardly manage digital issues.

In addition to following the evolution of provenance described by Douglas, Japanese archivists have to tackle a backlog issue with regard to paper archives. Making the content list of each item based on PSR is laborious and time-consuming. Additionally, the fieldwork required in PAP faces time restrictions to process an archival collection because the participants take time to gather in the field. For example, there is an extremely long case wherein the processing of one historical collection has been going on for 40 years and continues even today.<sup>49</sup> This style of processing contrasts with the 'More Product Less Process' (MPLP) approach to backlog in the United States, which aims to provide users with quicker access to archival materials by omitting detailed work.<sup>50</sup> If they are to resolve the backlog issue, MPLP can assist Japanese archivists in reviewing their workflow, which will force them to question its theoretical ground, namely, the principle of respect for the original form.

## Conclusion

Archival science in Japan has developed through the addition of Western influence to the domestic basis. Research on Japanese history and diplomatics has contributed to the progress of the processing style of archival documents. Japanese archivists have been acquiring Western knowledge to improve the theory and practice of Japanese archival science since the 1980s, which has resulted in the development of PAP. While some

researchers doubt its practical usefulness, PAP still represents the principal viewpoint on the theoretical understanding of the principles of archival science. It upholds the principle of respect for provenance as a concrete entity, the principle of original order, which is commonly identified as the original form, and the principle of equal treatment, which has never existed in the West. This understanding remains largely unchanged, although some Japanese archivists continue to study Western works.

However, archival science in the West has evolved to the extent that it has reviewed the principle of provenance and original order. These theoretical changes arose due to the influence of postmodern thought and digital technology. The same changes should occur in the production and maintenance of current records in Japan. It is necessary to consider whether a PAP's perspective on theory and practice can survive in this situation. For instance, when dealing with digital records contained in a private workstation, processing by way of PAP would begin by drawing sketches or taking pictures of the desktop screen and images inside each directory. The second phase would include the examination resulting in a detailed description of every document in every directory, and then processing archivists would perform structural analysis to restore the original form and make an archival description of a basic inventory. Finally, they would create a database system to grant consent for a variety of retrieval needs from users. However, this approach completely ignores the existence of metadata that is unreadable to humans and depreciates an archival collection into a group of single data without any archival bond. The time has come when Japanese archivists must review and update their understanding of archival principles and their application.

Eric Ketelaar, at the first conference of the Japan Society for Archival Science held in 2004, presented the step that they might take. He declared that archival science can only flourish through careful study and through the exchange and comparison of concepts, views, and attitudes in different traditions.<sup>51</sup> More careful study is needed on the theory and practice of different traditions in Japanese archival science, and there needs to be more ardent mutual exchange and comparison so that archival science can flourish in this postmodern and digital world.

## Notes

1. Jennifer Douglas, 'Origins and Beyond: The Ongoing Evolution of Archival Ideas about Provenance', in Heather MacNeil and Terry Eastwood (eds), *Currents of Archival Thinking*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Libraries Unlimited, Santa Barbara, 2017, pp. 25–52.
2. The argument in this section is based on Yo Hashimoto, 'Dankaitekiseiri to Ōbeigataseirion no Hikaku: Houhouron no Chigai to Shussho oyobi Genchitujosonchōgensoku no Kaishaku' ['Comparison of Phased Archival Processing and Western Archival Processing: Methodological Differences and Interpretation of the Principle of Respect for Provenance and Original Order'], *Ākaibuzugaku Kenkyū* [*Journal of the Japan Society for Archival Science*], no. 23, 2015, pp. 4–22.
3. Masahito Andō, *Kirokushiryōgaku to Gendai: Ākaibuzu no Kagaku wo Mezashite* [*Archive Science and Modern Society*], Yoshikawakōbunkan, Tokyo, 1998, p. 111.
4. International Council on Archives, *ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Ottawa, 2000, p. 11.
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## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Notes on contributor

*Yo Hashimoto* is an Assistant Professor at the University of Kyoto. Having worked as an archivist in several institutions, including the National Institute of Japanese Literature, the Archives for Environmental Studies in the Ohara Institute for Social Research at Hosei University, the Rikkyo Research Center for Cooperative Civil Societies, and the Teikoku Databank Historical Museum, he is now mainly responsible for Digital Records Preservation Planning. His research interests lie in the application of archival diplomatics to Japanese digital record management and preservation.