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A Science of Facts? Classifying and Using Records in the French Imperial Archives under Napoleon

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ABSTRACT

The article explores the practice of historical research in connection with archival management at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, focusing on revolutionary and imperial France, when the French archives underwent unprecedented alteration. More precisely, it deals with the period 1808–14, when the archives directed by former revolutionary P. C. F. Daunou were merged into a new Palais des Archives and the historical archives of Europe were transported to Paris to form a central imperial repository. The article argues that the management, classification and use of archival documents followed the notion of history as a social science and an analytical empirical discipline put forward by the influential group of the *Idéologues* in post-Thermidorian France. This resulted in a peculiar way of dealing with the mass of new sources now available in the Archives de l'Empire. Indeed, the practice of historical research in the French archives was linked to a small, yet significant innovation in data management and material culture, namely, the use of filing cards in order to extract facts from documents. The article discusses the distinctive features of archival management and historical research in this transition period in comparison with the supposed “archival revolution” of Romantic historiography.

In the early 1830s, Jules Michelet embarked on the writing of his monumental *Histoire de France*, which would not be completed until a decade later. In a famous passage from the second volume, Michelet, a young but already prominent professor at the *École préparatoire* in Paris and head of the *section historique* of the National Archives, recalled his vocation as a historian listening to the murmurs of the dead in those “paper catacombs” and praised the work of the first archivists in creating such a vast collection:

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Mr. Camus, who was a gallican like his predecessor De Puy, served the Republic with the same zeal as Du Puy had served the monarchy. Camus's successor Mr. Daunou was the proper founder of the Archives, and in his time the Archives of France became those of the world. He devised [the archives'] wonderful classification. It was a glorious time for the Archives. While Mr. Daru opened up the mysterious repositories of Venice for the first time, Mr. Daunou received the spoils of the Vatican. From elsewhere, North and South, the archives of Germany, Spain, and Belgium also came into the Palais Soubise. Two of our colleagues went to seize Holland's archives too.¹

The homage paid by Michelet to his predecessors and to the Napoleonic regime was unusual among his peers. In postrevolutionary France, a new generation of historians turned to the archive in order to find the roots of the French nation and the origin of civil rights; and while using history as a political tool, as had the previous generations of scholars, they nevertheless underscored their own originality. True, the July Monarchy had reinstated Pierre Claude François Daunou to his former position as director of the archives, so Michelet's homage had a clear political meaning. Still, he made a distinction between those who had simply gathered together the archives and those who no longer used them as mere repositories of parchments, but instead as mirrors of "lives of men, of provinces, of peoples."² To emphasize discontinuity, with a fair dose of oversimplification he even stated that no historian before 1830 had ever really worked in an archive. In this same epoch, on the other side of the Rhine, Leopold Ranke famously proclaimed the novelty of his own discovery of archival sources and critical method.³

The birth of modern archive-based historiography has been, and still is, the object of contrasting appraisals. On the one hand, scholars now tend to emphasize the

1. "M. Camus, gallican comme son prédécesseur De Puy, servit la république avec la même passion que Du Puy la monarchie. M. Daunou, successeur de M. Camus, fut, à proprement parler, le fondateur des Archives, et à cette époque les Archives de France devenaient celles du monde. Cette prodigieuse classification lui appartient. C'était alors un glorieux temps pour les Archives. Pendant que M. Daru ouvrait, pour la première fois, les mystérieux dépôts de Venise, M. Daunou recevait les dépouilles du Vatican. D'autres parts, du Nord et du Midi arrivaient à l'hôtel de Soubise les archives d'Allemagne, d'Espagne et de Belgique. Deux de nos collègues étaient allés chercher celles de Hollande" (Jules Michelet, *Histoire de France* [Paris: Hachette, 1833], 2:700–701).

2. "vies d'hommes, de provinces, de peuples" (*ibid.*, 2:702). On the Romantics' attitude, see Marcel Gauchet, "Les 'Lettres sur l'Histoire de France' d'Augustin Thierry," in *Les Lieux de mémoire*, ed. Pierre Nora (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 787–850.

3. Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

ideological and self-fashioning value of the Romantics' supposed "archival revolution" and investigate it as part of the anthropological and cultural formation of the modern historian's persona; on the other hand, new research delves into early modern and eighteenth-century erudition in order to determine what access there was at the time to archival sources.⁴

One way of transcending the continuity versus revolution dilemma is to look at practices, drawing on what has been termed the "archival turn" of historiography.⁵ Reconnecting the history of historical writing to that of archival management can offer new insights into changing ideals of the historian's task, approaches to archival sources and criteria of historical writing in the period of transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. This shift of focus to scholarly practices is obviously part of a broader movement in the history of science and of the humanities. Indeed, the history of archives raises questions about the evolution of key notions across various areas of knowledge such as information, facts, and objectivity in relation to materiality.

With regard to each of these notions, revolutionary and imperial France provides an excellent perspective. An epoch that soon became a polemical point of reference for both historians and archivists (Michelet himself was an archivist and a historian), it witnessed unprecedented archival alterations; and the abundant documentation presents a good opportunity to reconsider the relationship of media to intellectual history.

This article deals with the period 1808–14, when the recently created National Archives underwent further transformations due to two main factors mentioned by Michelet: first, the transfer of most holdings into a new Palais des Archives on the right bank of the Seine (still in use); second, the visionary project to move the historical archives of Europe to Paris, starting with those of the former Holy Roman Empire, to be transported from Vienna, and the papal archives, to be relocated from Rome.⁶

4. See, e.g., Carolyn Steedman, *Dust* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001); Pieter Huistra, Herman J. Paul, and Jo Tollebeek, eds., "Historians in the Archive: Changing Historical Practices in the Nineteenth Century," *History of the Human Sciences* 26, no. 4 (2013); Daniela Saxer, *Die Schärfung des Quellenblicks: Forschungspraktiken in der Geschichtswissenschaft 1840–1914* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014). On the use of archives, see Markus Friedrich, *Die Geburt des Archivs: Eine Wissensgeschichte* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2013), 231–70; Filippo de Vivo and Maria Pia Donato, eds., "Scholarly Practices in the Archives 1500–1800," *Storia della Storiografia* 68, no. 2 (2015).

5. In the growing body of scholarship, see Ann Blair and Jennifer Milligan, eds., "Toward a Cultural History of Archives," *Archival Science* 7, no. 4 (2007); Randolph C. Head, ed., "Archival Knowledge Cultures in Europe, 1400–1900," *Archival Science* 10, no. 3 (2010).

6. On the history of the French National Archives, see the old but still useful Henri Bordier, *Les Archives de la France* (Paris: Dumoulin Roret, 1855); and, though very polemical, Léon de Laborde, *Les Archives de la France, leurs vicissitudes pendant la Révolution, leur régénération sous l'Empire* (Paris: Renouard, 1867); Lucie Favier, *La Mémoire de l'Etat: Histoire des Archives Nationales* (Paris: Fayard, 2004).

In what follows, my aim is not to assess the extent of archival looting, but rather to investigate the techniques and the “little tools of knowledge” by means of which records were handled.⁷ Both archival management and historical research in the French archives appear to be linked to a small, yet significant, innovation in data management and material culture, which reflected a certain idea of history as a science and, in turn, shaped the writing of history. They also reveal, however, the discrepancy between theoretical statements and research practices, which likewise appears to be characteristic of this period.

CLASSIFYING ARCHIVES: A COLLECTION OF COLLECTIONS OR A UNIVERSAL ARCHIVE?

I shall not deal with the motives that pushed Napoleon and the chief archivist Daunou—a former Oratorian who had been a prominent politician in post-Thermidorian France, an outstanding figure in the cultural politics of the *Directoire exécutif*, and a member of the influential group of so-called *Idéologues*—to conceive such a grand program of archival looting. It started as an act of war during the military occupation of Vienna in 1809 and a means to temper Pope Pius VII’s opposition to the regime and initially had a predominant fiscal and administrative scope but rapidly evolved into a much wider plan of reuniting what Daunou called “a vast European collection of documents” in Paris, a plan that was stubbornly pursued until the fall of Napoleon.⁸

First, however, some preliminary remarks will be useful. The French did not lack experience in dealing with enormous masses of documents. The National Archives were created by merging and selecting of several small and large repositories in Paris and its *département*; throughout the country, archives were also selected and at least partly deposited in departmental repositories.⁹ Nor did they lack experience in the spo-

7. Peter Becker and William Clark, eds., *Little Tools of Knowledge: Historical Essays on Academic and Bureaucratic Practices* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001). See also Arndt Brendecke “Tabellen und Formulare als Regulative der Wissenserfassung und Wissenspräsentation,” in *Autorität der Form – Autorisierung – Institutionelle Autorität*, ed. Wulf Oesterreicher, Gerhard Regn, and Winfried Schulze (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2003), 37–53; Volker Hess and J. Andrew Mendelsohn, “Case and Series: Medical Knowledge and Paper Technology, 1600–1900,” *History of Science* 48, no. 2 (2010): 287–314.

8. Yann Potin, “Kunstbeute und Archivraub,” in *Napoleon und Europa: Traum und Trauma*, ed. Bénédicte Savoy (Munich: Prestel, 2010), 91–99; Maria Pia Donato, “Des hommes et des chartes sous Napoléon: Pour une histoire politique des archives de l’empire (1809–1814),” *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* 382, no. 4 (2015): 81–102. On Daunou, see Alphonse-Honoré Taillandier, *Documents biographiques sur P.-C.-F. Daunou* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1841).

9. Krzysztof Pomian, “Les Archives: Du Trésor des chartes au Caran,” in *Les Lieux de mémoire*, ed. Pierre Nora (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 3999–4677.

liation of cultural heritage from allied and enemy countries.¹⁰ The routinization of cultural looting meant that a well-oiled machine was already in place by the 1810s. The whole process of packing and transporting files followed a complex procedure of double marking at departure and arrival, so that, despite their rearrangement in Paris, there were virtually no losses before the return of the archives to their original or new sites at the Restoration. In other words, implementing the great Archives de l'Empire was a matter of paperwork as well as of military power.

According to the instructions of the chief archivist Daunou, files and documents arriving from abroad must undergo three operations, each with its specific paperwork: *classement, inventaire, copie traduction et analyse des pièces*. Two teams of archivists and men of letters were hired to form a *Commission allemande* and a *Commission italienne* as more records were shipped to Paris. Each operation, though progressing in parallel, brings to light a different aspect of the link between materiality and knowledge in the archive.

At the inception of the National Archives as the registry of the Legislative Assembly in 1790, Armand-Gaston Camus introduced a broad thematic classification that he later expanded when the scope and nature of the archives broadened. This artificial nomenclature (e.g., *section législative* with its *collections des lois, procès verbaux des assemblées*, etc.), which would be lamented by late nineteenth-century record keepers preaching the *respect des fonds* (i.e., the integrity of documentary units in the form they were transmitted to the central archives), was not only in line with archival practices elsewhere, but indicated the various sites where the papers were stored. Nevertheless, when in 1808 Daunou eventually acquired a new building and reunited most holdings in it except the judicial section, he kept and extended his predecessor's classification.¹¹

Foreign archives brought to Paris did not fit into the original scheme. These archives were not completely unknown, especially those of the Vatican—although access had always been extremely difficult, information had circulated in various ways, and over the course of time scholarly publications had revealed some of its treasures.¹² This knowledge made it possible to classify Roman and “German” records into ad hoc sec-

10. Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali, *Ideologie e patrimonio storico-culturale nell'età rivoluzionaria e napoleonica: A proposito del trattato di Tolentino* (Rome: MIBAC, 2000); Bénédicte Savoy, *Patrimoine annexé: Les biens culturels saisis par la France en Allemagne autour de 1800* (Paris: MSH, 2003); Pierre-Yves Lacour, *La République naturaliste: Collections d'histoire naturelle et Révolution française (1789–1804)* (Paris: Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, 2014).

11. *Tableau systématique des archives de l'Empire, au 15 août 1811* ([Paris]: Baudouin, [1811]); Pomian, “Les Archives,” 4037–40.

12. La Porte du Theil, e.g., spent six years in Rome on behalf of the Académie des Inscriptions in order to edit Pope Innocent III's registries.

tions on the basis of information from local record keepers (some of whom were seconded to Paris) and preliminary surveys in Paris: each box was cursorily examined and labeled in alphabetical order, duplicating that of the French department. The overall design was to create an archive that, like a museum for universal history, would have a section for France, of course, and then for Spain, the Holy Roman Empire, Italy, and the Low Countries. Weekly and monthly reports informed the chief archivist as to the extent and nature of the various *fonds*, so that he could draw up lists and tables in order to have detailed knowledge of the Empire's possessions, improve the overall classification and, where necessary, move items.

The new sections within the French Imperial Archives were a combination of thematic groupings and collections preserved in their original form. Section C of the Archives de Rome, titled "Possession et prétentions de la Cour de Rome," for instance, was made up of files and registries taken from, among other collections, the *armadi* of the Secret Archives, the Apostolic Chamber, the *Congregazione dei Confini*, and the *Acta Congregationis Concistorialis*, whereas the records of congregations and papal offices such as the Datary, Penitentiary, or Propaganda Fide were kept together.¹³ The archives from Vienna were also classed under three headings—*archives politiques, administratives, judiciaires*—and the records of the Aulic Council were divided into political and judicial sections according to their nature and content.

In the summer of 1811, however, Daunou traveled throughout Italy to inspect archives in view of further acquisitions. On the basis of existing inventories and reports of local authorities, he conceived a different classification which may have been aimed at merging files regardless of their origin: "Charters and parchments; history of cities and republics and their constitution; history and records of great families; topography and statistics; domain; foreign affairs; correspondences; miscellanies."¹⁴ This division partly matched the existing French sections and obviously reaffirmed the practical and fiscal purposes of recordkeeping, but it put more emphasis on the historical value of documents. Reflecting Mabillon's notion of documents as atoms of history, each being a fact in itself as well as encapsulating other facts, there was to be a separate, universal collection of parchments, merging French ones with those coming from other cities.¹⁵

13. *Tableau systématique*; Enrico Flaiani, "Roman Archives in Paris 1810–1819: Archival Looting in Rome in the Napoleonic Age" (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 2015), 67–68.

14. "chartes et parchemins, histoire et constitutions des villes et républiques, histoire et titres des grandes familles, topographie et statistique, archives domaniales, relations extérieures, correspondance, mélanges" (Daunou's undated note, Archives Nationales [hereafter AN], AB Ve 1, 1, n.n. fol.).

15. Undated draft by Daunou concerning the Florentine Archivio Diplomatico, AN, AB Ve 6, n.n. fol. On the "atoms of history," see Michel Foucault, *Les Mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966).

Indeed, the selection of files must proceed on criteria of “1 Historical interest resulting from the nature of the item, the dignity of the person who issued it, or its antiquity; 2 basic usefulness resulting from the government’s need to consult certain papers and to have them at hand; 3 profit to be gained from titles, either because they can serve to recover [properties], or because of the number of copies that will be requested.”¹⁶ Archivists were instructed to note all relevant events in political and ecclesiastical history as well as the arts and sciences—a common tripartite division in eighteenth-century historiography.

In contrast to many French collections that had been selectively discarded by the revolutionary *Agence temporaire des titres*, Italian archives preserved series from the Middle Ages onward. Daunou considered the political heritage of ancient city-states and republics to be the heart of the Italian department in the imperial archives, complementing the French legislative section. This keen interest in past political institutions was typical of the *Idéologues*. Furthermore, besides Daunou’s heartfelt republicanism, it echoed the increasing curiosity about medieval republics as the cradle of modern liberties, a theory put forward by Johannes von Müller and, especially, Simonde de Sismondi and would later pass on to Romantic liberal historians.

It is possible that Daunou’s 1811 scheme did not imply the physical rearrangement of files but was meant solely to facilitate future comparative research (although, it should be noted, the archives were accessible by the director’s permission only).¹⁷ Whatever the case, it sheds light on his idea of the archive, which was less an administrative and fiscal institution (as Napoleon, though fascinated by the idea of reuniting all things precious in Paris, mostly intended it) and more a scholarly one, where sources for universal history would be kept and preserved. This shift in meaning is interesting in itself. The Enlightenment history of civilization had obviously been a bookish enterprise, not an archive-driven endeavor. Daunou availed himself of Napoleon’s logistics to give life to this dream—or, more accurately, the dream that Enlightenment historians had never dared to dream. He was, in fact, tentatively reviving the

16. “intérêt historique résultant de la nature même de la pièce, ou de la dignité des personnes dont elle émane, ou de son ancienneté; 2 utilité habituelle résultant du besoin que le gouvernement peut avoir de consulter certains papiers, de les avoir plus immédiatement à sa disposition; 3 produit à tirer de l’examen et de la possession des titres, soit parce qu’ils servent à opérer des recouvrements, soit parce qu’ils donnent lieu à un grand nombre d’expéditions” (undated draft by Daunou, AN, AB Ve 6, n.n. fol.).

17. Indeed, the principle of accessibility of the National Archives stated in the revolutionary laws basically meant that deputies could access what was originally the repository of the Assembly, whereas citizens could ask copies of documents pertaining to their properties and personal records, as was practiced in other European countries at the time. The director could nevertheless authorize consultation, as Daunou actually did on several occasions, namely, with his fellow academician Raynouard; see n. 50 below.

agenda of the *Idéologues*, who wanted to reestablish history as a branch of political science—the “record of the events through which the human species propagated, civilized or depraved itself”—that encompasses “facts related to several facts.”¹⁸

BRIEF INTERLUDE: IS HISTORY THE SCIENCE OF FACTS?

Few eighteenth-century historians and educated people, regardless of their degree of skepticism with regard to historical knowledge or their contempt for history in general, would have disagreed that, although facts are not history itself, history deals with facts, that is, in Aristotelian terms, with particulars. As Voltaire memorably wrote in the *Encyclopédie*, history is “the narration of facts that are considered to be true, whereas fable is the narration of facts considered to be false.”¹⁹

Few, however, would have cared to define what a fact is apart from its obvious meaning of an event, something that has happened in time. Again, the *Encyclopédie* expresses such ambivalence in the entry for “Fait” by Diderot: “This is a word very difficult to define. To say that one uses it in every circumstance when anything passes from the state of possibility to the state of existence does not make it any clearer.”²⁰ History was intrinsically conjectural, yet critique gave, in Marmontel’s words, “more or less authority to facts, according to their degree of possibility, likelihood, notoriety, and according the weight of testimonies who confirm it,” and enabled historians to penetrate the very source of events.²¹ In the wake of Mabillon, diplomatics helped to prioritize records and to tell true charters from false ones; chronology, geography, heraldry, numismatics—all served to distinguish real facts from made-up ones, weeding out the relics of the past.

Yet one question remained: how does one establish new facts? What, after all, are historically relevant facts? Is the archive the right place to look for them? Eighteenth-century culture had some hesitation on this point, as few thought of history as a matter of digging in archives, although the vast majority agreed that archives were the repos-

18. “registre des événements à travers lesquels le genre humain s’est propagé, civilisé ou dépravé . . . les faits relatifs à plusieurs faits” (Pierre Claude François Daunou, *Cours de bibliographie*, Bibliothèque nationale de France [hereafter BnF], ms. n.a.f. 21921, fols. 422–24, and n.a.f. 21897, fol. 10v).

19. “Le récit des faits donnés pour vrais; au contraire de la fable, qui est le récit des faits donnés pour faux” (*Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* [Paris edition], 8:220).

20. “Voilà un de ces termes qu’il est difficile de définir: dire qu’il s’emploie dans toutes les circonstances connues où une chose en général a passé de l’état de possibilité à l’état d’existence, ce n’est pas le rendre plus clair” (*Encyclopédie*, 6:383). On the gestation of a new notion of fact with regard to erudition, see Lorraine Daston, “Perché i fatti sono brevi?,” *Quaderni storici* 108, no. 4 (2001): 745–70; Gianna Pomata and Nancy G. Siraisi, eds., *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

21. “plus ou moins d’autorité aux faits, suivant leur degré de possibilité, de vraisemblance, de célébrité, et suivant le poids des témoignages qui les conferment” (*Encyclopédie*, 4:491–92).

itories of (mostly) original records and, therefore, a source of authority.²² The usefulness of diplomas for revealing the distant and obscure Middle Ages was commonly acknowledged, and even the moderately skeptical Voltaire conceded that archives were handy for this purpose; but what about modern history and its overabundant sources?

The Enlightenment ideal of *histoire philosophique* made things more complicated. Scholars have dismissed the opposition between *histoire savante* and *histoire philosophique*; and yet in the eyes of *philosophes* erudition could hinder our understanding of the progress of mankind.²³ This implied the need to recast the scope of universal history as well as the notion of historical fact; criticisms of *histoire bataille*, “that common surface of events which occupies the details of the vulgar historian,” as John Millar notably put it, became commonplace.²⁴ Hence, late Enlightenment historians searched for methods to systematize the mass of facts and objectify the progress of civilization, itself a fact to be made evident *more geometrico* by means of tables, synopses, and maps, intended to measure the unmeasurable.²⁵ Indeed, according to some, the goal of scientific history was to collect, probe, order, and establish causal connections, rather than to narrate in a brilliant style.²⁶

When the *Idéologues* in post-Thermidorian France embarked on the project of reframing all fields of knowledge through analysis and the founding of a comprehensive science of man, they had to deal with the ambivalences of eighteenth-century culture vis-à-vis history.²⁷ Constantin-François Volney’s mission was, in fact, to defend the usefulness of history for the Republic, while affirming its status as a science capable of detecting social and moral laws; this entailed accepting the probable nature of his-

22. Kaspar R. Eskildsen, “Inventing the Archive: Testimony and Virtue in Modern Historiography,” *History of the Human Sciences* 26, no. 1 (2013): 8–26.

23. Chantal Grell, *L'Histoire entre érudition et philosophie: Étude sur la connaissance historique à l'âge des Lumières* (Paris: PUF, 1993).

24. I quote from Peter Burke, “Ranke the Reactionary,” in *Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline*, ed. Georg G. Iggers and John M. Powell (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 39. On the evolution of universal history in the *longue durée*, see Hervé Inglebert, *Le Monde, l'Histoire: Essai sur les histoires universelles* (Paris: PUF, 2014).

25. Peter Hanns Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); Keith M. Baker, *Condorcet: From Natural Philosophy to Social Mathematics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975); Bertrand Binoche, ed., *Nouvelles lectures du Tableau historique de Condorcet* (Quebec: CIERL, 2010); Jean-Pierre Schandeler, “Histoire et ‘esprit géométrique’ chez d’Alembert,” in *Les philosophes et l’histoire au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Muriel Brot (Paris: Hermann, 2011), 89–123. On the transformation of tables over time, see Benjamin Steiner, *Die Ordnung des Geschichte: Historische Tabellen in der frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008).

26. Martin Gierl, *Geschichte als präzisierte Wissenschaft: Johann Christoph Gatterer und die Historiographie des 18. Jahrhunderts im ganzen Umfang* (Stuttgart: Fromman-Holzboog, 2012).

27. On their internal differences, see Martin S. Staum, *Minerva’s Message: Stabilizing the French Revolution* (Montreal: McGill–Queen’s University Press, 1996).

torical knowledge, while devising new methods for reading sources critically and establishing and systematizing facts scientifically, instead of being at the mercy of errors and caprices. His *méthode analytique et philosophique* consisted in looking at one people or nation individually and following them step by step along their physical and moral existence, that is, to put “all the facts of such an existence in order, in order to try to deduce from their mutual action the causes and effects of the origin, progress and decadence of that kind of moral combination that is called body politics and government.”²⁸ History is a pragmatic science, in the double sense of being oriented toward facts and ultimately meant to serve practical-political aims: “From such a full table of positive, well-established facts, one would in the first place have all the data for the intelligence of the moral and political constitution of one nation. Thus, the interplay of actions and reactions of each part upon the others would become the unequivocal object of reflections and combinations of the utmost relevance for the theory and sound art of governing and writing the laws.”²⁹

Volney’s fellow academician Daunou held similar tenets. In the debate on education in the Year II, he considered history in the wake of Condillac to be a conjectural discipline, suitable only for secondary schools, but a science nonetheless. Similar ideas eventually informed the education law of 3 Brumaire of the Year IV. In his *Cours d'idéologie*, he treated history as a fundamental faculty of human understanding: “In every branch of learning, there are history, science and art. History is the table of facts and science that of relations. History includes notions that are gained through induction. . . . The object of history is supposedly contingent, that of science is conceived as necessary.”³⁰ But history also formed the experimental branch of science because

28. “[mettre] en ordre tous les faits de cette existence, pour chercher ensuite à déduire de leur action réciproque, les causes et les effets de l’origine, des progrès et de la décadence de ce genre de combinaison morale que l’on appelle corps politique et gouvernement” (Constantin-François de Volney, *Leçons d’Histoire*, in *L’École normale de l’an III*, vol. 2, *Leçons d’histoire, de géographie, d’économie politique*, ed. Daniel Normand [Paris: Dunod, 1994], 103). See also Jean Gaulmier, “Volney et ses Leçons d’Histoire,” *History and Theory* 2, no. 1 (1962): 52–65; Elisabeth Guibert, “Volney, Daunou et la conception de l’histoire (une épistémologie politique),” in *L’Héritage des Lumières, Volney et les idéologues*, ed. J. Roussel (Angers: Université d’Angers, 1988), 157–65; Jean-Pierre Schandeler, “Les Leçons de Volney de l’An III : Comment sauver l’histoire savante,” in *Le Moment idéologique : littérature et science de l’homme*, ed. Yves Citton and Lise Dumasy (Lyon, ENS, 2013), 69–91.

29. “D’un tel tableau de faits bien positifs et bien constatés, résulterait d’abord toutes les données nécessaires à bien connaître la constitution morale et politique d’une nation. Et alors ce jeu d’action et de réaction de toutes les parties les unes sur les autres, deviendrait le sujet non équivoque des réflexions et des combinaisons les plus utiles à la théorie de l’art profond de gouverner et de faire les lois” (Volney, *Leçons*, 105).

30. “En chaque genre d’étude, il y a histoire, science et art. L’histoire est le tableau des faits, et la science celui des rapports. L’histoire comprend les connaissances qu’on obtient par induction. . . .

“these modes or degrees of knowledge intertwine fruitfully: it is not necessary that history is completed for science to be born. As soon as a certain amount of facts collected by history is sufficient to establish a system of relations, it is advisable that science gets hold of them and [in turn] that science’s first general views provide history with new objects of observation and experience.”³¹ Therefore, given the unity of human nature and the priority of the institutional over the social, history as a discipline “is nothing other than a way to consider the science of society. . . . Although political, history is most often multidisciplinary and amounts to narrating any fact regarding the human species.”³² Chronology and geography (including descriptions of countries, i.e., statistics) were the pillars on which the history of ancient and modern nations needed to be built.

But, again, how was the *Idéologues*’ ideal of history to be put into practice? How were facts to be established? Volney was an expert on ancient history and chronology, and he considered the library to be the site where the historian finds the material for his work like the astronomer in the observatory and the naturalist in the botanical garden.³³ Daunou himself, although he took the task of casting doubt on half-established truths very seriously, was neither an innovative historian nor an archive-based researcher.³⁴ And yet, as archivist general, he found himself confronted by the raw material of the past: could the archive be the laboratory of the “experimental” branch of political science?

INVENTORYING RECORDS, EXTRACTING FACTS

Taking a close look at the second operation of the imperial archivists, *Inventaire*, sheds light on the circumstances under which the foreign archives brought to Paris generated knowledge about the past. Obviously, numerous finding aids were requisitioned together with the rest of papers. From the Roman archives, for example, 2,153 items were

La matière de l’histoire est supposée contingente, celle de la science est conçue comme nécessaire” (Daunou, *Études idéologiques*, BnF, n.a.f. 21908, fol. 16). And see Bertrand Plongeron, “Nature, métaphysique et histoire chez les Idéologues,” *Dix-huitième siècle* 5, no. 3 (1973): 375–412.

31. “Ces modes ou degrés de connaissance s’entremêlent utilement: il n’est pas nécessaire que l’histoire soit complète avant que la science naisse. Dès qu’un certain nombre de faits recueillis par l’histoire suffit pour établir un système de rapports, il est fort à propos que la science s’en empare et que ses [i.e., of science] première vues générales fournissent à l’histoire des nouveaux sujets d’observation et d’expérience” (Daunou, *Études idéologiques*, BnF, n.a.f. 21908, fol. 16).

32. “[l’histoire] pouvait n’être qu’une manière de considérer la science sociale. . . . Quoique politique, assez habituellement on ne peut nier qu’elle ne soit polytechnique [et] . . . consiste à raconter les faits quelconques du genre humain” (Daunou, *Papiers*, BnF, n.a.f. 21897, fol. 10v).

33. Volney, *Leçons*, 618.

34. Pierre Claude François Daunou, *Analyse des opinions diverses sur l’origine de l’imprimerie* (Paris: Baudouin, an X [1802]), and his incomplete manuscript “Abrégé chronologique de l’histoire de France depuis 1715” (BnF, n.a.f. 21097).

inventories or indexes. Nonetheless, new inventories had to be prepared, and Daunou had clear ideas on how to proceed:

We have prepared regular squares of paper that will be distributed to the members of the commission. Upon opening one box, you write the box number and the cursory list of what it contains on one of these squares (see the model attached [the attached file is now missing]). Then, on a square for each item in the box, you describe the item (like in the other models attached). Each file must recall the box number and the item number. It must contain the description and analysis of the item and even the transcription of the lines that seem important, that is, those which disclose historical facts that are not yet known and are worth being. . . . For those items that are of nearly no interest, you will only copy on one square the lines regarding them that are already in the cursory description of the box. . . . Likewise, each book or manuscript volume will be represented by a square of paper, which will contain a longer or shorter description according to the importance of the subject.³⁵

Daunou's instructions pointed toward something that was at once an inventory, a *regestum*, an index, and, not least, a collection of facts distilled from the raw material of the archive.

In many respects, such an analytical inventory had little originality and was merely a continuation of the work that the French records had already undergone.³⁶ More generally, the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had been a period of great endeavors in the inventorying, cataloging, summarizing, copying, and editing of archival materials, especially charters and parchments, which formed special collections in several state archives like those of Vienna and Florence. In France, building on previous

35. "On a préparé des carrés de papier égaux qui seront distribués aux membres de la commission. A l'ouverture de chaque boîte, écrire sur l'un de ces carrés de papier le numéro de la boîte et l'état sommaire des articles qu'elle contient (voyez le modèle ci-joint pour la boîte 147). Puis, sur autant de carrés de papier qu'il y aura d'articles dans cette boîte, écrire la notice de chaque article ou pièce (conformément aux autres modèles ci-joints). Cette notice doit rappeler le n.º de la boîte et le n.º de la pièce. Elle doit contenir la description et l'analyse de la pièce et même la transcription des lignes qui paraîtront importantes ; c'est à dire de celles qui offriront quelque trait historique non encore connu et digne de l'être. . . . Pour des articles qui ne présenteront presque aucun intérêt, on se contentera de reproduire sur les carrés de papier les lignes qui les concerneraient dans l'état sommaire de toute la boîte. . . . Chaque registre, ou volume manuscrit sera de même représenté par un carré de papier, qui en contiendra la notice, plus ou moins longue, selon l'importance de la matière" (Daunou to the archivists, AN, AB Ve 1).

36. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that archivists still relied on the nine-volume inventory of the *Trésor de chartes*, compiled in the seventeenth century by Dupuy and Godefroy, which formed section J of the holdings at the hôtel de Soubise.

projects to edit the collection of the laws of the realm, the last royal historiographer, Jacob-Nicolas Moreau, came up with the idea of a *Cabinet des chartes*, where copies of the laws and deeds of the monarchy, dispersed in the archives throughout the country, would be gathered together and kept.³⁷ The chronological index of published charters had been entrusted to the Académie des Inscriptions.³⁸ This academy and later the Institut National were also in charge of *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque royale*, a brief description of selected manuscripts and excerpts of relevant passages.³⁹ Altogether, the Revolution marked a gigantic, if uneven, effort to inventory and catalog *les biens de la Nation* seized from the church, the crown, and the nobility, including books, manuscripts, and archives. Eighteenth-century archivists had sometimes even embraced the idea of subject indexes so accurate and perfect that they would enable a quasi-automatic writing of history.⁴⁰

Still, Daunou's project looks more innovative if one considers that it relied on filing cards, an unusual format at the time. Of course, slips of paper—more or less regularly formatted—were routinely used as preliminary aids by scholars, as insightful recent studies have shown. Working with cards was the method devised by naturalists like Carl Linnaeus, Albrecht von Haller, and Antoine-Laurent de Jussieu, bibliographers like François Rozier, and historians like Johann Christoph Gatterer.⁴¹ Loose sheets

37. Dieter Gembicki, *Histoire et politique à la fin de l'Ancien régime: Jacob-Nicolas Moreau, 1717–1803* (Paris: Nizet, 1979); Keith M. Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 59–85.

38. *Table chronologique des diplômes, chartes, titres et actes imprimés concernant l'histoire de France*, the first volume of which appeared 1769 and the uncompleted fourth in 1790; Blandine Barret Kriegel, *L'Histoire à l'âge classique: Les académies de l'histoire*, 2nd ed. (Paris: PUF, 1996), 265–364.

39. Under Napoleon, in 1806, the Institut National planned to edit all French diplomas which ceased to be included in the *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*; this was resumed by the Institut National, and Daunou was an active collaborator and later editor.

40. This was, for instance, the idea of Pandolfo Spannocchi, an archivist in Siena, in the 1770s (Archivio di Stato di Siena, Concistorio 2576), while in the same years, both the Segreteria Vecchia and the Riformagioni in Florence underwent systematic subject indexing, on which see Clementina Rotondi, *L'archivio delle Riformagioni fiorentine* (Rome: Centro D, 1972); Carlo Vivoli, ed., *Dagli archivi all'Archivio: appunti di storia degli archivi fiorentini* (Florence: Edifir, 1991). A similar project, halfway between a subject index and a *codex iuris*, was put forward in the 1780s in Turin (Archivio di Stato di Torino, Corte, Regii Archivi, cat. I, mazzo 3, 8).

41. Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010); Gierl, *Geschichte*, 187–216; Staffan Müller-Wille and Isabelle Charmanter, "Natural History and Information Overload: The Case of Linnaeus," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 43, no. 1 (2012): 4–15. On Jussieu and the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, see Vincent Denis and Pierre-Yves Lacour, "La logistique des savoirs: Surabondance d'informations, savoirs d'archives et technologies de papier au XVIIIe siècle," *Genèse* 102 (March 2016): 107–122. François Rozier used cards to prepare his *Nouvelle table des articles contenus*

were also routinely used in archives, as in Florence's *Spogli del Diplomatico* (eventually bound in volumes).⁴² In Rome, Giuseppe Garampi's *schedario* of the Secret Archives amounted to several boxes of slips of paper, all brought to Paris in 1810, which were later glued into volumes that are still in use.⁴³

True, collective compilations of cards were making their way into libraries and museums.⁴⁴ In 1791 playing cards were used to catalog confiscated libraries in view of creating a *Bibliographie universelle de France*. Daunou, who had been a librarian for years and was an expert on bibliography, may have been inspired by such an information management system.⁴⁵

The use of cards was meant to impose uniformity on the information gathered by archivists dealing with extremely diverse material. Furthermore, cards could be easily deployed, selected, reordered chronologically, and recast thematically. For instance, by January 1811 the German Commission had prepared numerous detailed descriptions of the most important items and 2,100 *bulletins*, "each representing a bundle and which cursorily record the number of files, the object and the date of the items."⁴⁶ The cards were divided into five *titres*: *Couronne impériale, principautés et dignités de l'Empire; Diète de l'Empire; États et provinces tant de l'Empire Germanique que du reste*

dans les volumes de l'Académie royale des sciences de Paris, which Daunou might have also known; but, again, the cards only served for preliminary indexing. On Cuvier's method of working with ersatz specimens in the form of drawings, see Martin J. S. Rudwick, "Georges Cuvier et la collecte d'alliés internationaux," in *Le Muséum au premier siècle de son histoire* (Paris: Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, 1997), 591–606.

42. Sandra Marsini, "Gli strumenti di ricerca realizzati nel Pubblico Archivio Diplomatico di Firenze dal 1779 al 1852," in *Tra libri e carte: Studi in onore di Luciana Mosci*, ed. Teresa De Robertis and Giancarlo Savino (Florence: Cesati, 1998), 160–61.

43. Germano Gualdo, ed., *Sussidi per la consultazione dell'Archivio Vaticano: Lo Schedario Garampi; I Registri Vaticani; I Registri Lateranensi; Le Rationes Camerae; l'Archivio Concistoriale* (Vatican City: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 1989).

44. Markus Krajewski (*Zettelwirtschaft: Die Geburt der Kartei aus dem Geist der Bibliothek* [Berlin: Kadmos, 2002]) rightly underscores the differences between cards for personal use and those compiled by different people; and see Frédéric Barbier, Thierry Dubois and Yann Sordet, eds., *De l'argile au nuage une archéologie des catalogues* (Paris: Bibliothèque Mazarine; Geneva: Bibliothèque de Genève, 2015). See further Isabelle Charmantier and Staffan Müller-Wille, "Carl Linnaeus's Botanical Paper Slips (1767–1773)," *Intellectual History Review* 24, no. 2 (2014): 215–38; Volker Hess and J. Andrew Mendelsohn, "Savages' Paperwork: How Disease Classification Arose from Scholarly Note-Taking," *Early Science and Medicine* 19, no. 5 (2014): 471–503.

45. Pierre Riberette, *Les Bibliothèques françaises pendant la Révolution (1789–1795): Recherches sur un essai de catalogue collectif* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1970); Judith Hopkins, "The 1791 French Cataloging Code and the Origins of the Cards Catalog," *Libraries and Culture* 27, no. 4 (1992): 378–404; Denis and Lacour, "La logistique."

46. "représentant chacune des liasses et font connaître sommairement le nombre des dossiers, l'objet et la date des pièces" (Daunou to the minister of Interior, January 1, 1811, AN, F 2 I, 359).

de l'Europe; Guerres et pacifications; traités, négociations, correspondances; and Affaires religieuses. Those from the imperial diet's acts were arranged chronologically.

The easily handled filing cards thus formed a kind of meta-archive, more flexible than the real one. They basically served to reorder papers into thematic sections, extracting and merging files according to their subject, as was common in eighteenth-century record keeping. A report from the German Commission discloses how it worked: "On 2,100 bundles we marked numbers that will serve to order the papers in the same order in which the 2,100 cards are now arranged. But before we actually execute any new filing, we will do the same with series A and AB which would appear to have some affinity with [this] series RE1. We think that the three series will have points in common and that they could merge into one which could be titled Political part of the German archives."⁴⁷

Through a system of cross-referencing, in which the archival position and *notice* number were indicated, cards helped to draft lists of relevant documents for copying and publishing. Of course, they could also be shown to the minister of the interior, on whom the Archives depended. But cards formed a meta-archive in the strict sense of the word, too, for they contained historical facts which had been extracted and made objective beyond the hazardous variety of real historical documents. They combined information on the record or folder (following the basic rules of diplomatics) and on the content, so that a card became a fact that could be arranged with other similar units. As such, they could be handed out for the purpose of writing history.

"ANALYSE DES PIÈCES": WRITING HISTORY WITH ARCHIVAL ERSATZ

We do not really know what results such a meticulous index for historical writing might have yielded. The foreign archives remained in Paris for only a few years and were surrendered long before the *analyse des pièces* was completed. What is more, the work of the Italian Commission was immediately directed by the government toward the contingent needs of the Empire in its struggle against the papacy. As early as October 1810, everyone was requested to signal anything that would unveil the *politique ambitieuse* of the Roman court.⁴⁸ In January 1811, an order was issued to search "in all parts of the pontifical archives documents concerning the misuses that pope have made of their spiritual ministry against the authority of sovereigns and against the tranquility of peo-

47. "On a suscrit sur les 2100 liasses des numéros qui serviront à établir entre les papiers l'ordre dans lequel sont actuellement rangés les 2100 bulletins. Mais on attendra pour exécuter cet arrangement qu'en eût fait le même travail sur les séries A et AB qui paraissent avoir des affinités avec la série RE1. On prévoit qu'il y aura lieu à des rapprochements entre les trois séries et qu'elle pourront en former qu'une seule qui sera intitulé Partie politique des Archives Germaniques" (ibid.).

48. Daunou to the archivists, October 1, 1810, AN AB Ve 1a, 1.

ples.⁴⁹ The commission had to show all cards already compiled, which were to be ordered chronologically, and do further research, paying special attention to all records about France since 1789 and anything relating to the pontificates of Gregory VII, Innocent III, and Boniface VIII and the 1682 four articles of faith of the Gallican Church. So much, then, for the former *Idéologues'* aspiration to refound universal history. The archives must serve the Emperor's new *guerre de diplômes*.

The physical examination of the surviving *bulletins* confirms that cards, especially those of the correspondences of nuncios, were exploited by Daunou for the enlarged 1811 edition of his *Essai sur la puissance temporelle des papes*; this also included short tracts on *Considérations générales sur les entreprises de la cour de Rome, Exposéé des maximes de la cour de Rome, des maximes de l'église gallicane* and *De la conduite de la cour de Rome depuis 1800*, which also contained transcripts of bulls and other documents. Cards were also used to a lesser extent by his fellow academician François Raynouard, who at the time was working on a book on the Knights Templars and collating French and Vatican documents on this topic.⁵⁰

Writing history on the basis of collectively established metadocuments, rather than of actual documents, had somewhat contradictory consequences. First, in Daunou's *Essai*, archival sources retained the status of *pièces justificatives* for arguments modeled on older Gallican historiography. It does not do justice to Daunou to assess his historical skills on the basis of a tract that he wrote at the Emperor's command in the heat of the battle against the pope and then hastily revised. Nonetheless, he used the same technique to make further lists of events in his notes for future use. Moreover, Raynouard's *Monumens historiques sur la condamnation des chevaliers du Temple*, for all his erudition, was likewise written in the vein of a judicial *mémoire justificatif*.

What is more, the card system produced a kind of dry, fact-driven objectivity that left little space for an overall comprehension of historical causation. Although archivists could, in theory, transcribe relevant passages, they rarely did so and, for the most part, merely summarized the content of files. Daunou, like a naturalist in his cabinet, selected and arranged these *notices*, picking dates and events; moreover, he prepared his own cards, in which the already distilled facts were further condensed and refined. Arguably, then, the dryness of erudition for which later historians reproached Daunou

49. "dans toutes les parties des archives pontificales le pièces relatives à l'abus que les papes ont fait de leur ministère spirituel contre l'autorité des souverains et contre la tranquillité des peuples" (Daunou to the Commission italienne, January 3, 1811, AN, AB Ve 1a, 1).

50. François-Juste-Marie Raynouard, *Monumens historiques relatifs à la condamnation des chevaliers du Temple et à l'abolition de leur ordre* (Paris: Égron, 1813); Maria Pia Donato, "Archivi e politica sotto Napoleone. I documenti vaticani a Parigi e l'uso della storia," *Rivista Storica Italiana* 128, no. 1 (2016): 129–64.

was due less to his distaste for the “dark” Middle Ages than to the distancing effect induced by working on cards: the media cannot really be divorced from intellectual history, and vice versa.

Objectivity, however, collided with collaborative note taking. Despite the strictest of instructions, the compilers followed their own cultural instincts, interests and sensibilities. As the twenty-eight extant boxes of *bulletins* in Paris show,⁵¹ each compiler had his favorite topics. The Roman archivists seconded to Paris, for instance, were more interested in the religious history of Central and Eastern Europe and less in episodes of simony than their French colleagues, although they all shared an enmity toward the last Valois and, above all, Catherine de’ Medici, on whose condemnation Roman prelates and French crypto-republicans agreed. Despite the most ingenious of methods, the materiality of archival records resisted objectification when it came to extracting facts from sources extraneous to their original scope (unlike, say, past astronomical observations, meteorology records, or medical case histories).⁵² So much for the historian as scientist.

CONCLUSION: FACTS, THE ARCHIVE, AND THE RESURRECTION OF THE PAST

By the 1830s, when Michelet composed his *Histoire de France*, little was left of the late Enlightenment dream of a universal archive that had inspired Daunou, although the archive was at the core of the Romantics’ discourse on history as well as the liberals’ cultural politics. Little, too, was left of the *Idéologues*’ idea of history as a systematic science of facts, although Daunou defended the Enlightenment’s *histoire de la civilisation* in his writings and the analytical method in his lectures on *Histoire et morale* at the Collège de France, the chair that would go to Michelet in 1838.⁵³

Nineteenth-century culture was, in truth, obsessed with facts, and it would be incorrect to posit a divide between late Enlightenment and Restoration historians on this point. And although their philosophy of history rested on different theoretical backgrounds especially with regard to the contingent nature of history and the unity of human nature, it would also be misleading to emphasize the impact of such differences on the actual writing of history: Daunou is a case in point.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, the Roman-

51. Now found in AN, L 372–400.

52. Lorraine Daston, “The Science of the Archive,” *Osiris* 27, no. 1 (2012): 156–87.

53. Regina Pozzi, *Tra storia e politica: Saggi di storia della storiografia* (Naples: Morano, 1996), 13–65.

54. I draw on the broad notion of historicism as put forward by Jacques Bos, “Nineteenth-Century Historicism and Its Predecessors: Historical Experience, Historical Ontology and Historical Method,” in *The Making of the Humanities*, vol. 2, ed. Rens Bod, Jaap Maat, and Thijs Weststeijn (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), 131–47; see also Plongeron, “Nature.”

tics' focus shifted from institutions to societies and individuals, while analysis and systematization gave way to synthesis and intuition, tables were replaced by narrative and taxonomy by ecology. Accordingly, the *Idéologues'* fact-driven analysis that Volney and Daunou practiced and recommend to practice was not the document-driven first-hand objectivity that gained momentum in the nineteenth century, whether in Ranke's dispassionate version or in Michelet's empathetic and "colourful" style.⁵⁵

The meta-archive created by Daunou thus proved difficult to exploit further. This was, I would argue, due less to new standards of accuracy or to a less selective approach to archival repositories on the part of the Romantics than to changed attitudes toward sources, which were no longer regarded as mere substrata of information to extract. Equally relevant was a new ideal of the historian's persona working on his own in the archives to resurrect the past through his intimate relationship and (more or less fictional) physical proximity to the sources. The shift is noticeable, for instance, in Ranke's personal notes and excerpts when contrasted to Daunou's collectively compiled cards.⁵⁶

In 1851—the foreign archives were no longer available except those from Simancas, which Ranke was able to see in Paris—Michelet went through the files of Daunou's *Commission Italienne*.⁵⁷ It is worth noting that he was still interested in the same sensitive topics as his predecessors, including Boniface VIII, the investiture controversy, and the Wars of Religion. Furthermore, he never questioned the veracity of these notes. Michelet, however, was more attracted by religious history than by church history. Accordingly, he was especially curious about the Vatican's *Lettere di particolari*, in which humble clerics and nuns narrated their miserable lives. He considered these to be a source for capturing the *histoire des mœurs*, no longer regarded as the history of institutions, trade, science, and art but rather of the attitudes of common people; he therefore regretted the paucity of quotations, episodes, and, as he called them, "lives of men" that Daunou's archivists had extracted half a century earlier.

On one point, though, Daunou achieved a late victory. Long before the revival of card technology in twentieth-century quantitative history, in Restoration France as

55. Stephen Bann, *The Clothing of Clio: A Study in the Representation of History in Nineteenth-Century Britain and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 32–54; Wolfgang J. Mommsen, ed., *Leopold von Ranke und die moderne Geschichtswissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1988).

56. Mario Wimmer, "Rankes Quellen," *Historicum* 110, nos. 1–2 (2015): 48–65. The comparison is striking as both favored diplomats' letters, which they took at face value. See also Philipp Müller, ed., "Archives and History: Making Historical Knowledge in Europe during the Nineteenth Century," *Storia della Storiografia* 68, no. 2 (2015).

57. Félix Rocquain, "Les travaux de Michelet aux Archives nationales," in *Notes et fragments d'histoire* (Paris: Plon, 1906), 61–92.

elsewhere in Europe, the filing card became a standard tool in archives. In the mid-nineteenth century, a contemporary of Michelet's, Louis Douët d'Arcq, prepared a new analytical inventory of the *Trésor des chartes* and the K-L-M sections created by Daunou on cards. This was later used by Alexandre Toulet, whose inventory is made up simply of fiches, with brief descriptions or full transcriptions of documents, printed in chronological order.⁵⁸

To conclude, archival indexes and inventories are among those "little tools of knowledge" that have long been neglected on account of their seemingly self-evident nature.⁵⁹ But they can, in fact, reveal a great deal about changing notions of evidence, facts, objectivity, and often, as in the case of the French archives under Napoleon, the practice of historical research and implicit ideas about the remit of history.

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59. For new approaches to inventories, see especially Randolph C. Head, "Mirroring Governance: Archives, Inventories and Political Knowledge in Early Modern Switzerland and Europe," *Archival Science* 7, no. 4 (2007): 317–29.

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