

To: Renate Behrens, Chair, RDA Steering Committee

CC: Anne Welsh, Secretary, RDA Steering Committee

From: Chris Holden, Translations Team Liaison Officer

Subject: Formal response to RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2 – Proposal on adding ““scribe agent / etc.”, “scribe agent / etc. of”, “wood engraver agent / etc.” and “wood engraver agent / etc. of” as new elements to the RDA Toolkit, the corresponding new definitions to the Glossary, and the corresponding new properties to RDA Registry

The Technical Team Liaison Officer would like to thank the Translations Team Liaison Officer for so quickly following up to the suggestions provided at the April RSC Meeting.

I appreciate that this proposal is for elements that were explicitly requested by regional representatives at the April RSC meeting, indicating community support. However, I want to reiterate my own concerns noted in [my response](#) to RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/1, as well as agree with the responses of EURIG and ORDAC. When considering the addition of future elements, the RSC should be careful not to tie RDA too closely to any one vocabulary or community cataloging practice and avoid the scope creep of adding an unmaintainable number of elements. The Technical Working Group would also like to remind all RDA users that community-specific element subtypes can be documented in the Community Resources platform of the RDA Toolkit.

Recommendation 1.1: Adding “scribe agent / etc.” and “scribe agent / etc. of ” to the Toolkit

Approve.

Recommendation 1.2: Adding “scribe agent / etc.” and “scribe agent / etc. of ” to the Glossary

Approve.

Recommendation 1.3: Adding “has scribe agent / etc.” and “is scribe agent / etc. of” to the Registry

Approve.

Recommendations 2.1-2.3

As noted, the Translations Team Liaison Officer consulted with me prior to the publication of this proposal, where I made the suggestion that **wood engraver agent** should be a narrower term of **engraver agent** rather than **printmaker agent**. This was due to my broad reading of the current RDA definition of **engraver agent**:

“An agent who is responsible for creating a manifestation by cutting letters, figures, or other marks on a surface such as a wooden or metal plate used for printing.”

This does not explicitly define an engraver as an agent who uses the intaglio process. The Technical Working Group had previously been made aware of this ambiguity, and it was one of the outstanding issues conveyed to me upon assuming my position in 2025. Read literally, the RDA definition for **engraver agent** encompasses both intaglio and relief processes used for printing.

In the introduction to this proposal, the Translations Team Liaison Officer mentions several external vocabularies in which a wood engraver is not a subtype of engraver, but there also exist other external vocabularies where this is not the case. The RBMS relationship designator vocabulary [housed at id.loc.gov](https://id.loc.gov), for example, has **wood-engraver** as a narrower term of **engraver**.

The responses of both NARDAC and the Examples Editor make a compelling argument that **wood engraver agent** should not be a narrower term of **engraver agent**, but instead should be on an equal level of the hierarchy with **engraver agent** under **printmaker agent**. To end all ambiguity and ensure that RDA does not rely on outside practices and vocabularies for its definitions, I agree with NARDAC’s response that the best way to implement this would be not just to define **wood engraver agent** as a narrower term of **printmaker agent**, but also to propose changing the definition of **engraver agent** to clarify that this element applies specifically to intaglio printing rather than relief printing. This would eliminate a long-standing ambiguity in RDA and bring the definition of these elements in line with community expectations.

Recommendation 2.1: Adding “wood engraver agent / etc.” and “wood engraver agent / etc. of” to the Toolkit

Tentatively approve.

If other RSC members agree with the Example Editor’s assertion that **engraver agent** should apply specifically to agents working with the intaglio process, then the broader definition of these elements should be changed to **printmaker agent** and its related elements, and a proposal should be drafted for clarifying the definition of **engraver agent** in RDA.

Recommendation 2.2: Adding “wood engraver agent / etc.” and “wood engraver agent / etc. of” to the Glossary

Tentatively approve, with the same caveats as Recommendation 2.1.

Recommendation 2.3: Adding “has wood engraver agent / etc.” and “is wood engraver agent / etc. of” to the Registry

Tentatively approve, with the same caveats as Recommendation 2.1.