

To: Renate Behrens, RSC Chair

From: Anne Welsh, RSC Secretary

Subject: Summary of formal responses 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

This document collates in tabular form the responses received from the voting members of the RSC to [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2](#), viz:

- [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2/ALyC](#)
- [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2/EOO](#)
- [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2/ExamplesEditor](#)
- [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2/EURIG](#)
- [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2/NARDAC](#)
- [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2/ORDAC](#)
- [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2/TTLO](#)
- [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2/WCEO](#)

Recommendation 1	Approved by 6 : ALyC , EOO , ExamplesEditor , ORDAC , WCEO , TTLO Approved with amendments by 2 : EURIG , NARDAC	Note 1: Total number of respondents: 8 Note 2: Suggested removal of “unpublished” from the broader element.
Recommendation 2	Approved by 3 : ALyC , ORDAC , WCEO Approved with amendments by 5 : EOO , EURIG , ExamplesEditor , NARDAC , TTLO	Note 1: Total number of respondents: 8 Note 3: Hierarchy of <i>wood engraver agent, etc.</i>

Note 1: Responses were received from all **8** voting members of the RSC. Please note that as both the ORDAC Representative and the EURIG Representative were involved in the

drafting of the proposal, their responses reflect solely the views of their respective constituencies; their own views having been expressed at the drafting stage of the proposal.

Note 2: EURIG refers to its objection to [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/1](#) Recommendation 5¹ in [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/1/EURIG](#) page 1, which stated:

“EURIG would appreciate guidance for translating those of these new elements which refer to unpublished manifestations into the appropriate elements when creating metadata for published reproductions/facsimiles. ("Scribe", as defined in the proposal, is not applicable to a published manifestation, but "calligrapher" has emphases not present in the definition of "scribe".)”

As recorded in [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/1/Decisions](#), Recommendation 5² was rejected following discussion at the April RSC Meeting:

“[RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/1](#) suggested a range of terms and definitions on which agreement was not reached in the April Meeting. These will either be discussed and included in the follow-up proposal RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2 or a later proposal if more time is needed to deal with the issues raised in [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/1/EURIG](#).”

The Europe Representative was invited, along with the ORDAC representative, who had done some preparatory work on *wood engraver agent, etc.*, to contribute to the drafting of [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2](#), and so [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2/EURIG](#) represents solely the views she obtained in constituency consultation, her own views having been, per usual RSC procedures, expressed at the drafting stage of the proposal.

Notwithstanding the Europe Representative’s presumed efforts to address the concerns she conveyed in [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/1/EURIG](#), the constituency response continues to express its previous concern:

“The earlier EURIG objection to the definition of scribe still remains as long as the broader element specifies that the manifestation is unpublished. There needs to be a way to connect the scribe who produced the manuscript to a published facsimile of that manuscript; the calligrapher family of elements is inadequate for the same reason it is inadequate to describe the scribe of the unpublished manifestation.”

It goes on to assert that, “If this disjoint can be resolved, EURIG would approve the recommendation.”

[NARDAC](#) compares the terms for *scribe agent, etc.* to those for *rubricator agent, etc.*, and a change of hierarchy from that proposed to resolve the published / unpublished issue:

“NARDAC questions the reasoning for removing the word “unpublished” from the definition for scribe agent based on the removal of the word from the definition from rubricator agent. The broader element for rubricator agent had been changed from producer agent of

¹ Labelled Change#5.1 ; Change#5.2 ; Change#5.3

² Labelled Change#5

unpublished manifestation to creator agent of manifestation (which NARDAC supported). By comparison, the broader element proposed for scribe agent is producer agent of unpublished manifestation, and so scribe agent retains the sense of an agent producing unpublished manifestations.”

At first glance, this may solve the issue.

Note 3: The hierarchy of *wood engraver agent, etc.* is the subject of debate.

The [Examples Editor](#) summarises it as follows:

“While I approve the definitions for the proposed “wood engraver” elements, I strongly recommend assigning “printmaker agent,” etc. as the broader element in the hierarchy. I disagree that a wood engraver is a type of engraver, despite the similarities in the terms. The print expert Bamber Gascoigne notes that “there can be verbal confusion between an engraving and a wood engraving, since they share a name and use a similar tool; but the wood engraver creates a relief block, cutting away the non-printing areas, whereas the intaglio engraver scoops out the lines which will print.”³

The activity of an engraver results in a plate in which the image is recessed below the surface, while the activity of a wood engraver results in a block in which the image is raised. The production of an engraving is an intaglio process requiring a press with sufficient pressure to squeeze the paper (or other surface) into the inked, recessed lines to transfer the image. The production of a wood engraving is a relief printing process that is essentially the same as letterpress printing: the raised image is inked and pressed.

The proposed definitions for “wood engraver agent,” etc. clearly indicate that wood engraving is a relief process. While the current definitions for “engraver agent,” etc. are technically broad enough to accommodate “wood engraver agent,” etc. as narrower elements because the “engraver” definitions do not mention the intaglio process, it would be misleading to situate “wood engraver” as a narrower term. In addition to Gascoigne’s observations, I take into account the other authorities mentioned in the proposal that situate wood engravings with relief rather than intaglio prints. It is certainly not necessary for RDA to align with every vocabulary that we may use in resource description, but these external authorities should be taken into consideration.”

The [Education and Orientation Officer](#) makes the following request:

“I approve the addition of the elements, but before finalizing, would like to request a discussion among the RSC regarding the broader/narrower element hierarchy as highlighted in the Examples Editor’s response (RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2/ExamplesEditor).

Given the differences across different authorities regarding an appropriate broader element for wood engraver agent, brief documentation of RSC’s interpretation would provide useful

³ Bamber Gascoigne, *How to Identify Prints* (Thames & Hudson, 2004), 6a.

background for trainers who teach rare materials cataloguers, art cataloguers, and (potentially) archivists.”

NARDAC makes the following suggestion:

“Concerning the broader element, the RDA Technical WG Chair suggested that the logical element should be engraver agent instead of printmaker agent because engraver agent is currently defined as “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).” A wood engraver meets that definition by cutting an image or design on a piece of wood. The problem is that woodcutter agent meets the definition too but was considered a narrower element of printmaker agent. Therefore, if we choose one broader element for one element, we should choose the same for the other.

As the Translation Teams Liaison Officer notes, choosing engraver agent would go against the choice made by other sources, which, like RDA, consider engraving as an intaglio process (see the implied intaglio technique – “incision of marks on the surface of hard material” – in the definition at

<https://www.rdaregistry.info/termList/RDAproductionMethod/?language=en#1005>).

However, the RDA definition of engraver agent does not reflect that, presumably because it was originally worded to encompass both the intaglio and the relief techniques on various materials. But now that we are incorporating into RDA agents that use the relief technique, it becomes necessary to revise the definition to make it more specific. This would clear up any confusion with the relief techniques on wood and would allow both to have printmaker agent as their broader element.”

The Technical Team Liaison Officer read through the responses before making a response which drew on the substantive points. He states:

“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.”⁴

[EURIG](#) points out the need to assign alternate labels for *wood engraver*:

“For consistency, human consumption and possibly support of unconstrained properties in the Registry, the alternate labels for wood engraver agent should include "wood engraver". This is also in line with the alternate labels for scribe agent proposed in Recommendation 1.1.

If this issue is resolved, EURIG would approve the recommendation.”

⁴ NARDAC's suggested definition is set out here for the benefit of whichever member of the RSC may be tasked with drafting a proposal to amend *engraver agent*, etc. and to assist the Secretary in compiling RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2/Decisions:

“The revision to the definition of *engraver agent* limiting it to the intaglio technique could be as simple as this one (the suggested wording also aligns the definition with that of *etcher agent*):

Marked-up

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

Clean copy:

An agent who is responsible for creating a manifestation by incising letters, figures, or other marks on a metal plate or other surface used for printing.

The end result would be that *wood engraver agent* (relief technique), *woodcutter agent* (relief technique), and *engraver agent* (intaglio technique) could have *printmaker agent* as a broader element.”